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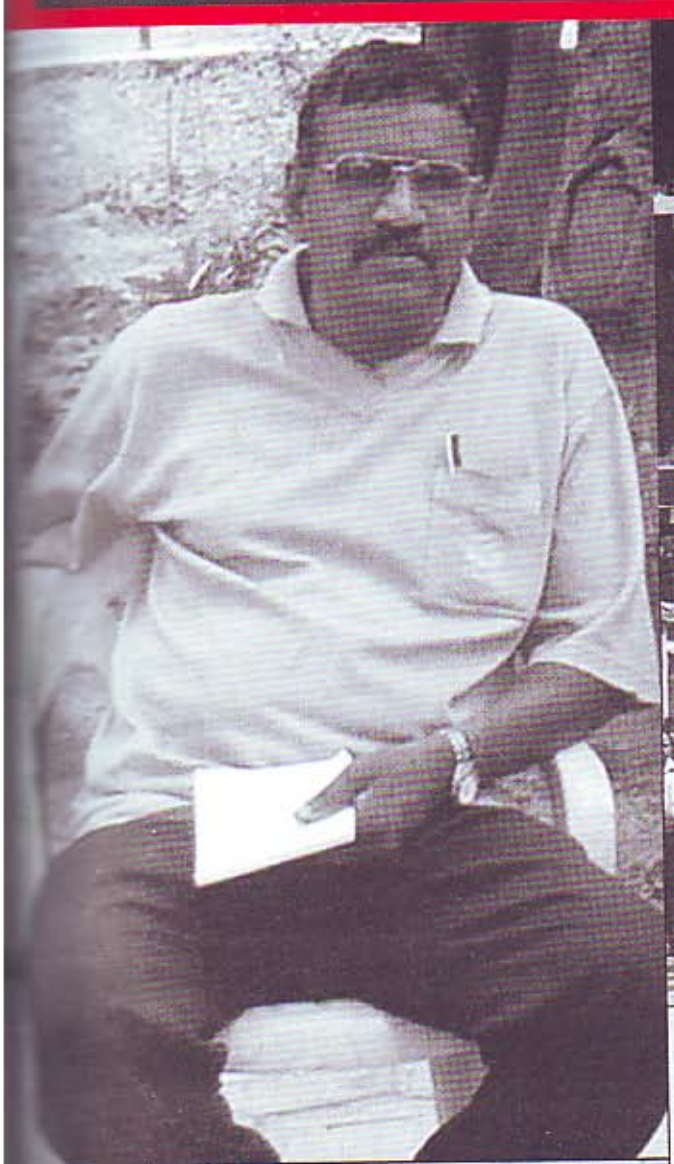

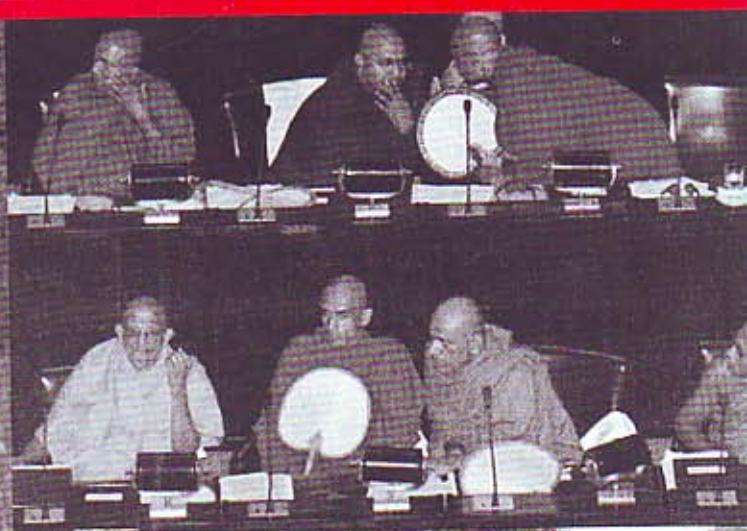

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"I do not agree with a word of what you say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it"
- Voltaire

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COVER: Journalist Aiyathurai Nadesan, murdered on 31 May (top left); Protest march by Tamil Media Alliance in Colombo (bottom left); Monk MPs caught up in brawl in parliament (top right); Demo in Jaffna demanding ISGA (middle right); Premier Mahinda Rajapakse, Norwegian envoy Eric Solheim and Ambassador Hans Brattskar (bottom right)

A False Debate

Following their visit to Colombo last month and the discussions the Norwegians had with the Government and the LTTE leadership, there was a great deal of optimism about the prospect of peace talks being resumed. But recent developments indicate otherwise. The obstacle to resumption of talks centres on the LTTE's demand that its proposal for the setting up of an "Interim Self Governing Authority" (ISGA) for the Northeast should be the only item on the agenda when talks are resumed. On the other hand, while the Government has agreed to discuss the LTTE's ISGA proposals, it also insists that "core issues" pertaining to a permanent solution should also be discussed in parallel. The Government, as spelt out by the President in her latest TV address, "has indicated the need to engage in discussions on a permanent solution to the conflict, while prioritising the need to agree on the structures of the interim authority, and on the urgency to set it up."

The respective positions have been widely known for some time, and the Norwegian facilitators have been engaged in an attempt to reconciling the gap between the parties. The sudden change in the tone and tenor of the latest missive from the LTTE raising the question of "War or Peace?" and accusing the President of "political duplicity" with a "devious plan" and warning of "calamity and destruction" and "ensuing bloodbath" has not only taken many by surprise, but also is signalling a turn that is potentially dangerous.

One suspects that there may be other factors at play that are probably contributing to the situation in which the LTTE is becoming more and more apprehensive. One factor is the situation in the eastern province where, although the LTTE has succeeded in subduing its rebel faction headed by its renegade commander Karuna, he and his loyalists have continued to challenge its hegemony by carrying out hit and run operations against cadres belonging to the LTTE. Though the allegation has been vigorously denied, the LTTE has alleged that the Karuna group has been targeting LTTE cadres with the support of the Sri Lankan forces. The LTTE also sees the Sri Lankan Navy as placing obstacles to the movement by sea of its cadres from Mullaitivu to Batticaloa to deal with the renegade forces under Karuna.

Another factor that seems to have angered the LTTE is the efforts by the Government to carry out rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in the Northeast through the machinery of the North-East Provincial Council administration (NEPC). It was recently announced that the MPs representing the NorthEast were to be briefed about the development activities now being carried out by the NEPC administration at a two-day conference to be held in Trincomalee. The LTTE suspected that these initiatives are being directed by the President to spotlight activities of the NEPC in an attempt by her to weaken the claim by LTTE for setting up of the ISGA. The TNA MPs were advised boycott the event which they did. The LTTE has always resisted attempts by the Government in Colombo to undertake any development activities in the Northeast without the LTTE having a central role in any such work.

Another factor is what the LTTE regards as "malicious and false propaganda" by the Sri Lanka's state controlled media which was specifically raised by Mr Thamilchelvan during his latest discussions with the Norwegian Ambassador, Mr.Hans Brattskar. "The SLBC Tamil service is accommodating a one hour direct broadcast of malicious propaganda from the Tamil Broadcasting Corporation (TBC) London, a radio run by a former Tamil paramilitary group. The vicious propaganda is aimed at maligning the LTTE and creating North-East regionalism among the listeners and the radio is vilifying the Tamil cause," Mr. Thamilchelvan had complained to the Norwegian Ambassador.

Some commentators have with justification suggested that the debate as to whether at the resumed peace talks discussions should be confined to only the LTTE's ISGA proposal, or as the Government contends discussions should cover both the ISGA proposal and "core issues for a permanent solution", is a false debate. The LTTE's proposal is wide ranging so as invest the ISGA with "plenary" executive, legislative and judicial powers for the "governance of the NorthEast", including powers relating to law and order, power to create separate institutions with sole and exclusive jurisdiction for the administration of justice, powers to raise revenue and taxes, powers to regulate internal and external trade and to borrow internally and externally, controlling powers over all land with power to alienate and determine the appropriate use of all land, control over the marine and offshore resources of the adjacent seas and the power to regulate access thereto, control over the natural resources of the Northeast, and all other powers and functions exercised by the Government of Sri Lanka in and for the NortheEast.

An examination of the powers sought to be vested in the proposed ISGA makes it self evident that a discussion on the LTTE's ISGA proposal will inevitably lead to a discussion on the "core political issues" relating to self-rule and autonomy, and indeed the structure of the Sri Lankan State itself. As one analyst put it, the LTTE by placing its ISGA proposals has in effect brought the core political issues into agenda for talks, and the sooner this is acknowledged the better it is for the resumption of peace talks.

Norway in fresh bid to revive peace talks

Norwegian Ambassador Hans Brattskar met the LTTE leadership in Kilinochchi on 16 June in a fresh bid to revive peace talks after the Tigers warned of bloodshed if the peace process was not salvaged.

The Ambassador met with the head of the Liberation Tigers' political wing, Mr. S. P. Thamilchelvan and the head of the LTTE police service, Mr. Nadesan, to appraise them of the Sri Lankan government's position.

After the meeting with Mr Thamilselvan in Killinochchi, the Ambassador said that efforts would continue to resume to stalled peace talks between the Government and the LTTE.

He told reporters that, "We are continuing discussions on the issue of the peace talks. I think that we still are some way away from agreeing on the modalities and the timing for talks. But, as facilitator, it is important for us with continuing discussions with both the parties. My visit today is a routine visit, one that I will continue to have."

Responding to a question regarding reports in Colombo media about incidents in the Batticaloa district, he said: "We had also discussions on the situation in the East.

There has been some concern as some segments of the media are giving some incorrect picture of what is happening in the East. Mr. Thamilchelvan presented his views on the goings on in the East and I will of course convey those to the Government."

Answering another question about the next stage of the peace process he said: "This is a decision that needs to be taken by both parties. We will continue go back and forth between the parties, as facilitator until there is an agreement between both parties on the future steps. I feel we are not quite there, but we will continue our discussions. That is our role. As I said earlier, we are yet to arrive at agreement about modalities, format and the timing regarding resuming the peace talks."

A report in the TamilNet that during discussions with the Norwegian Ambassador, Mr. Thamilchelvan had expressed concern over the lack of progress in taking forward the peace process. He had pointed out the lack of political will in Colombo to resume talks on a firm basis. Mr. Thamilchelvan had raised serious concern that the cease-fire agreement is yet to be implemented fully to bring about normalcy and minimizing military violations. He had re-emphasized the lack of a proper mechanism for the delivering humanitarian assistance to the war affected people in the northeast.

Concern about London radio

During discussions with the Norwegian Ambassador Mr Tmilchelvan had also expressed his serious concern about "malicious and false propaganda" in Sri Lanka's state controlled media regarding the situation in the eastern Batticaloa district. "If the Sri Lankan Government is honest in taking the LTTE as a sincere partner in the peace process, this type of clandestine media activity should stop forthwith". Mr. S. P Thamilchelvan had told the ambassador.

Mr. Thamilchelvan told Mr. Brattskar that the Sri Lankan state media, the Tamil service of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation in particular, engaged in a vicious campaign of propagating false news about alleged confrontations in the east between Tigers and some breakaway elements of the LTTE.

The SLBC Tamil service is accommodating a one hour direct broadcast of malicious propaganda from the Tamil Broadcasting Corporation (TBC) London, a radio run by a former Tamil paramilitary group, Mr. Thamilchelvan said.

He said the vicious propaganda is aimed at maligning the LTTE and creating North-East regionalism among the listeners. The radio is vilifying the Tamil cause, he said.

Tigers accuse President of 'duplicity'

Blaming President Chandrika Kumaratunge for "linking ISGA with permanent poltical solution," as a "manipulative strategy to take forward the peace process for a while and then to abort it," the LTTE called upon the International community to recognize Ms.Kumarat-unge's 'political duplicity' and to "bring pressure on her government to be principled and honest in political negotiations," in a statement released 13 June and published in its Peace Secretariat website.

Earlier, accepting the LTTE as the sole representative of Tamils, accepting the Cease Fire Agreement (CFA) and to use the ISGA as the basis for discussions, the Tigers said, Ms.Kumaratunge raised hop-es for resumption of peace talks. But her new condition that "discussions on core issues should go parallel to [discussions on] interim administration," had derailed any hopes, the LTTE said.

The minority UPFA government faces dissolution any time and such unstable political environment is unsuitable for discussing serious matters related to "Tamil homeland, Tamil nationalism and Tamil self-rule," the LTTE argued. Further, the UPFA government is "not even prepared to bring in place an interim administration that will facilitate normal life, development and meet urgent humanitarian needs," as the government faces "opposition and threats in the South of Sri Lanka," the LTTE said.

The LTTE also accused security forces for the recent spate of killings in the East. The LTTE warned that foundation of peace laid during the last three years would crumble if the peace process is not advanced gradually and if the Sri Lanka government insists on discussing complex issues during early stages.

The LTTE added that the donor countries must take urgent and appropriate action if the situation is to be prevented from deteriorating further. the website further said. Jehan Perera of the National Peace Council is quoted as saying that the LTTE's statement was disturbing. "The situation is not good at all. I don't know if all thes

things mean a total breakdown or reversal of the peace process. One thing's for sure, the process is in a dangerous impasse."

Following is the statement issued by the LTTE in the wake of the Pre-sident's address to the nation:

"President Chandrika Kumaratunga did a climb down from her original rigid stance to take forward the peace process realistically when she accepted the LTTE as the sole representatives of the Tamils, while agreeing to resume talks from the point they were suspended, under the Ceasefire Agreement made with the previous government. The Pres-ident accepted the ISGA as the basis for the resumption of talks and that it be confined to the LTTE alone. These changes in the thinking of the President made the 'peace talks' a hopeful one. But alas, within a few days she threw in a new condition and those hopes were dashed.

It is therefore impractical on the one hand to discuss two different political issues at one and the same time while it is a risk to the peace process. Nevertheless the President does not seem to be perturbed over this risk, for she has a totally different agenda.

According to the President's devious plan, if the talks resume and meander on, the funds promised in Tokyo would be delivered to the Government and, of course, with a revitalized economy and war machine, it can be utilized to wage war against the Tamils.

The President, apparently, is making use of a timeworn and dilapidated strategy of cheating the LTTE and the donor nations. It is this strategy, or duplicity, that the international community and, more so the donor nations, should comprehend.

The present Government has been, from the time of assuming power, adamantly refusing to engage in or, at least seem to engage in, mutual goodwill measures with the LTTE. On the one hand, the President is appointing committees to take forward the peace process, while at the same time engaging in initiating mischievous international propaganda against the organization. As a direct confrontation, her forces are involved in killings in the Batticaloa district. Weakening the LTTE, diluting the strength of Tamil nationalism, distorting Tamil unity are areas the President's forces are keenly interested in.

It is therefore the moral responsibility of the international community to discern the words and deeds of the President and bring pressure on her government, both politically and economically, to be principled and honest in political negotiations.

For successful political negotiations, it is essential that gradual progress from easily agreeable issues leading subsequently to difficult political issues, be adopted.

This maxim must be conveyed by the international community to the President. If not, the foundation for peace, laid with international assistance, during the last three years, would be shattered. Once again, ensuing a bloodbath in Sri Lanka.

War or peace? The answer, for now, is in the hands of the donor nations and, their actions alone will decide the outcome."

President's sets out approach to peace process

In what was seen as a wide-ranging address to the nation on 12 June, President Chandrika Kumaratunga struck a hopeful note on prospects for peace over national television and radio but did not indicate when the proposed peace talks with the Tamil Tigers would be resumed.

The President in her address said that with a view to ending the conflict, her government was "making a sustained and serious effort to engage the LTTE in comprehensive peace negotiations to end the war, develop the North and East and address the grievances of the minority communities, in a way that will fulfil the reasonable aspirations of the Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities."

The President said, "The two parties are still working out what the next round of peace negotiations should be about. The LTTE would like the talks to focus only on proposals to set up an interim authority while the government has indicted the need to engage in discussions on a permanent solution to the conflict, while prioritising the need to agree on the structures of the interim authority and on the urgency to set it up. Over the past several weeks we have been in the process of resolving issues about the substance of the agenda for peace negotiations."

Making a reference to the delay in recommencing negotiations, the President said, "This delay in agreement on the agenda reflects the complexity of the peace negotiations, which in a democracy requires developing a consensus among diverse political viewpoints. It also indicates that we are taking negotiations very seriously and want to prepare for it in a thoughtful manner. We must also recall that we are starting political talks after a gap of more than a year. While the two parties have not yet reached agreement about how to proceed, the government will approach the issue of the content of the next round of talks in a principled and prudent manner." She said that an effective compromise to the problem of long-term importance of a lasting political settlement to the conflict and the short-term need to urgently develop the north and east had to be worked out.

"We are committed to having a political dialogue with the LTTE about the contours of a lasting solution. We know that it is only such a political solution that can ensure a just and stable peace in the country," she said adding "At the same time, as a responsible government, we take very seriously the urgent need to undertake effective development work in the north and east, and are willing to explore with the LTTE interim political measures that can address this need within the contours of the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the country."

The President said that in the past two months, her government

had restructured and revamped the peace related institutions. The Peace Secretariat had been placed under a new professio-nal leadership to carry out the complex technical task of implementing the ceasefire and supporting the process of neg-otiations. The ceasefire was an import-ant basis for the continuation of peace negotiations and the government wan-ted to ensure that everything was done to make all parties fully adhere to it.

In regard to development and reconstruction work in the Northeast, the President said, "We are strongly committed to relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction as a priority for the war-torn North and East of the country. As a reflection of the commitment of the Government, I have taken on the responsibility of this Ministry. We have restructured the previous RRR structures that existed under a large number of unconnected Ministries and governmental structures and brought them under one roof. My officials are in the process of visiting the North and East to explore areas where immediate relief measure can be taken, to ensure that concerns of people affected by the war can be addressed without delay."

Announcing the formation of National Advisory Council on Peace and Reconciliation, the President said, "Since the UPFA promised to conduct transparent and inclusive negotiation, I am initiating a broad-based national forum - the National Advisory Council on Peace and Reconciliation (NAC) - that will provide a means for the people of the country to contribute to a political settlement and work towards reconciliation. I will convene the NAC which will include political, religious and social leaders in the country to ascertain their views on how to bring peace, democracy and development to the country. The NAC will serve as a forum for:

a) Explaining to the country the Government's efforts to bring Peace; b) Briefing the country on the progress of Peace negotiations; c) Obtaining the views of all concerned parties and groups; and d) Promoting reconciliation and understanding among the different communities.

In regard to consultation and discussion with groups and parties other than the LTTE, the President said, "We will establish a continuing dialogue with all political leaders of the various communities and groups represented in Parliament. This consultation will proceed parallel to talks between the Government and LTTE with the objective of keeping the country informed of the progress of talks with the LTTE on one hand and of conveying to the LTTE the views of all concerned parties." ❑

President-TNA Talks

"The Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA) should be established in the northeast without delay so that Tamils could enjoy self rule in their homeland, Mr.R.Sampanthan, leader of the TNA parliamentary group, told President Kumaratunga during a discussion held on June 10, Thursday evening in the President's House, according to a TamilNet report.

Following an invitation from the President to the TNA parliamentarians, talks between President Kumaratunge and the parliamentary group of Tamil National Alliance began around 8.30 p.m. in the Presidential House and concluded after midnight, according to TNA sources. Twenty TNA parliamentarians led by Mr.R.Sampanthan participated in the talks. Two TNA parliamentarians Messrs M.K.Sivajilingam and S.Jeyananadamoorthy did not participate. Mr.Sivajilingam was out of the country and Mr.Jeyananthamoorthy was not well. Ministers Messrs Susil Premajayanth, Mangala Samaraweera and Nimal Sripala de Silva participated in the discussions with the President.

In a major move to revive the peace process, President Chandrika Kumaratunga had at the meeting with the TNA parliamentarians said that her government was ready to resume talks with the LTTE as soon as possible on the proposals for an Interim Self Governing Authority. TNA parliamentary group leader R. Sampanthan told a newspaper in Colombo that the President had also stressed that once matters pertaining to the ISGA were finalised, core issues should also be discussed at some point.

Tamils were fighting for self-rule under a federal constitution for the last fifty-five years but the Sinhala political leadership rejected it as separation and this led to the armed freedom struggle by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Even now after twenty years of war, attempts made to achieve self-rule under the ISGA is being rejected by Sinhala political leadership as a blueprint for separation, Mr.Sampanthan had told the President adding that that Tamils couldn't be deceived any more by the Sinhala political leadership. ISGA should be established in the northeast as a prelude to finding a lasting solution based on self-rule concept. Mr.Sampanthan had pointed out to the President that the ISGA is urgently needed to resettle and rehabilitate hundreds of thousands of internally displaced Tamil families now languishing in refugee camps and welfare centres for several years and even after the ceasefire agreement came into operation.

"The United National Party will not oppose the establishment of the ISGA. Hence we need the President to act with courage although some allies in the government would oppose it," the TNA delegation had told the President.

President Ms Chandrika Kumaratunge is reported to have told the TNA parliamentary delegation that she was prepared to resume peace talks with the LTTE on the basis of ISGA although she could not endorse some aspects of the ISGA. She had said the LTTE should be prepared to conduct talks on the core issues after the conclusion of talks on the ISGA. She had also said endorsement of people was needed for any decision taken during the talks with the LTTE and the LTTE should also contribute to this end.

Donors urge early talks

The international donor countries and agencies backing Sri Lanka's peace process have urged Colombo and the LTTE to "rapidly resume negotiations," failing which "donor attention and funding might go elsewhere."

The United States, the European Union, Japan and Norway, the co-chairs of the international efforts to financially support the peace process, met in Brussels on June 1 and urged "all political parties in Sri Lanka to support these talks," a joint statement said.

The donors, who met against the backdrop of differences in views between the Government and the LTTE on restarting talks, wanted the two sides to "agree on the establishment of an effective delivery mechanism for donor-financed development activities in the north and east," until "effective administrative structures are in place." The donors said they "looked forward to collaborating" with the newly-elected United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) Government and welcomed the Sri Lankan President, Chandrika Kumaratunga's "initiative to start the process for the resumption of the peace talks by calling on Norway to continue its role as facilitator." The donors also "commended" the Tigers for "reciprocating the request to Norway and expressing their commitment to resume the peace talks."

A sum of $4.5 billion was pledged last year by international donors who met in Tokyo, and linked its disbursement to ground-level progress in the peace process.

The full text of the statement released by the European Commission's Directorate General for External Relations follows:

"In a world of competing crises, Sri Lanka donor Co-chairs came together today and urged in the strongest possible terms a rapid resumption of the peace negotiations so that Sri Lanka can benefit from the generosity of the international community. They noted that, with so many other demands on donors, donor attention and funding might go elsewhere unless the peace process makes progress.

"The Co-chairs of the Tokyo Conference on Reconstruction and Development of Sri Lanka (the United States, the European Union, Japan and Norway) met in Brussels to further discuss their support for the Peace Process following the April 2 elections in Sri Lanka. They welcomed the recent commitments made by the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to resume Peace Talks.

"The Co-chairs looked forward to collaborating with the new United People's Freedom Alliance government and welcomed President Kumaratunga's initiative to start the process for the resumption of the Peace Talks by calling on Norway to continue its role as facilitator. The Co-chairs commended the LTTE for reciprocating the request to Norway and expressing their commitment to resume the Peace Talks. They urged all political parties in Sri Lanka to support these talks. The Co-chairs also repeated their continued full support to Norway's challenging task as facilitator.

"The Co-chairs were pleased to note that, by and large, the ceasefire has been upheld for more than two years with the assistance of the Nordic Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission. But the Co-chairs registered rising concern with the number of killings in the East recently. They condemned all such killings and called on both parties to do their utmost to continue to respect and implement the Ceasefire Agreement as the basis for the Peace Process. Co-chairs welcomed the recent co-operation between the Government and LTTE in the eastern Batticaloa district, with the assistance of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, to improve the overall security situation.

"The Co-chairs are encouraged by the LTTE's release of child soldiers and the continued commitment to work with UNICEF. The Co-chairs expressed their deep concern about reports of re-recruitments and urged the LTTE to refrain from any further underage recruitment and to release all remaining underage soldiers. In collaboration with UNICEF, donors should consider providing funds for shelters for those released children who have no homes to return to.

"The Co-chairs emphasised the importance of preserving the gains made in the earlier rounds of Talks and called on the parties in the peace process to bear in mind the principles of the Tokyo Declaration. The Co-chairs noted again that a peace settlement can only be sustained if it respects the legitimate rights and involvement of all ethnic groups, preserves the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and is based on the principles of democracy and human rights. The Co-chairs encouraged the parties to agree on the modalities to invite a Muslim delegation to the Peace Talks at an appropriate time for the deliberations on relevant substantive political issues. The Co-chairs also noted that success will depend on the willingness of the parties to show political courage and flexibility in discussions towards a peaceful solution.

"The Peace Process and the development process are mutually reinforcing and interlinked, as agreed in the Tokyo Conference last year. As such, the Co-chairs stressed that there should be no drift and no delay in resuming and taking forward the peace process. The Co-chairs called on donors to stand ready to accelerate implementation of their Tokyo pledges once properly prepared peace talks have resumed and noted that development assistance would inevitably increase as the negotiations made progress. The Co-chairs recognised that such assistance should be extended to the whole of the country, taking the poorest and the most conflict ridden areas into particular account. It will of course be necessary to continue providing humanitarian assistance wherever it is required.

"The Co-chairs also urged the Government of Sri Lanka to adopt and implement sound macro economic and development policies as well as other necessary reforms.

"In addition, and until effective administrative structures are in place in the North and East, the Co-chairs encouraged the parties to agree on the establishment of effective delivery mechanisms for donor-financed development activities in the North and East."

'Institutionalise ISGA' says LTTE

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam has demanded "institutionalising" an Interim Self-Governing Authority for the North-East (ISGA) before it discusses the core issues of the Sri Lankan conflict with Colombo.

The demand, made by the LTTE's political wing leader, S.P. Tamilchelvan, to the visiting Norwegian Special Envoy, Erik Solheim, marks the first publicly reported difference in approach between the new Sri Lankan Government and the Tigers on the resumption of talks. The Tigers, who unilaterally pulled out of talks in April 2003 demanded a politico-administrative structure for the North-East and subsequently submitted the ISGA proposals, which call for an LTTE-majority interim administrative body, with plenary powers over the North-East.

The LTTE Peace Secretariat in a news release issued on 26 May said that the Norwegian team comprising Mr. Erik Solheim, the Special envoy to Sri Lanka and Mr. Hans Brattskar, the Norwegian Ambassador to Sri Lanka have conveyed to the LTTE the thinking of Sri Lanka's President Ms. Chandrika Kumarathunge that "the discussions on ISGA proposals should take place parallel to the discussions on core issues."

The ruling United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA), led by Ms. Kumaratunga, has consistently stressed the need for the core issues - the political solution to the separatist conflict, including the nature of the post-conflict State.

However, according to its pres release, LTTE has "categorically told the United Peoples Freedom Alliance (UPFA) government through Norwegian facilitators that the institutionalization of the Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA) in the northeast province should take place first and that the core issues can be discussed later."

In responding to the President's thinking, Mr. Thamilchelvan said that "institutionalizing the ISGA should take place first so that we can demonstrate to the people that their urgent humanitarian needs would be effectively met with by the ISGA and will help to build confidence among the people who are the real stakeholders in the peace process."

The attempts to restart the stalled peace talks, as well as the LTTE's insistence on institutionalising the ISGA came up in the run-up to a crucial meeting of foreign donors in Brussels on June 1, where a total of $4.5 billion aid package was at stake for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Sri Lanka, pledged by the international donor community last year in Tokyo. The donors, who tied the aid to progress of the peace talks, have held back the release of funds following the breakdown in the talks.

Mr. Tamilchelvan, in a reference to the outcome of the April 2 parliamentary election, also said the Tamil thinking was "loud and clear"' and that the "the overwhelming mandate on the implementation of the ISGA proposals is a verdict that cannot be ignored."

Pandemonium in Parliament

Ugly violent scenes and chaotic disorder reigned supreme in the Sri Lankan Parliament on 8 June over the swearing-in of a Buddhist monk as an MP. The entire day's proceedings were marred after a brawl in the well of the Parliament. In the melee, the ceremonial Mace, which symbolises the progress of a session, was taken away, reportedly by a member of the ruling party, resulting in a four-hour halt to the proceedings. Two Buddhist monks were hospitalised.

The House did not transact business and was adjourned till next month. The government, led by United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) and the Opposition United National Party (UNP) blamed each other for the declining Parliamentary standards.

Tension gripped Sri Lanka's parliament when it reconvened at 10 a.m. on 8 June with the main item in the agenda being the appointment of standing committees and ministerial parliamentary consultative committees. Normally these committees are set up with a majority of members from the Government. However, because the present governing coalition, UPFA, does not possess an overall majority in parliament, the main opposition United National Front (UNF) and other minority parties had ganged up together to capture control of these committees.

In the 225 member- parliament the ruling UPFA currently holds 110 seats including three dissident Sri Lanka Muslim Congress parliamentarians Messrs Hussain Baila, Risard Badiudin and Najeeb Abdul Majeed and one of the two dissident Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) parliamentarian Venerable Pannananda Thera.

Earlier it was reported that another dissident JHU parliamentarian Ven. Kataluwe Ratnaseeha Thera had resigned from his parliamentary seat. However he later filed a case in the Colombo District Court alleging that he was abducted and forced to resign his seat, and the Court had issued an order preventing another Buddhist monk, Venerable Akmeemana Dayaratna Thera, from taking oaths as an MP till the case was finalized in Court, who had been nominated by the JHU in place of Ven. Kataluwe Ratnaseeha Thera,.

As the joint opposition parties, including 22 of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), hold the majority in parliament (115 seats), there was the fear in government circles that the opposition would capture control of the standing and ministerial consultative committees.

Disorder hit Parliament as soon as it met for the day and the Speaker, W.J.M. Lokubandara, invited the Buddhist monk, Ven. Akmeemana Dayaratna Thera, to take his oath as an MP from the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU).

MPs belonging to the ruling coalition, led by the Trade, Commerce and Consumer Affairs Minister, Jeyaraj Fernandopulle. objected, citing the court order restraining Ven. Dayaratna, from taking oaths as an MP.

Mr. Lokubandara, who is from the UNP, maintained that he had not received the court order and went ahead with the formalities. Ruling party members then rushed to the well of the House and blocked Ven. Dayaratna from proceeding towards the Speaker However surrounded by opposition MPs, he was taken to the Speaker by an alterative route behind the Opposition benches.

At this stage, according to the UNP, "a ruling party member spirited the Mace away," bringing the proceedings to a halt. Around 10.40 a.m., Mr. Lokubandara adjourned the House for 15 minutes and held a meeting of the party leaders, in an attempt to retrieve the Mace. However, that adjournment was to last nearly four hours, till the Mace was returned, around 2.20 p.m., after which Parliament was adjourned till July 20.

At separate press conferences after the Parliamentary pandemonium, the Government and the Opposition blamed each other for the declining standards of the unicameral legislature. Terming the events "very unfortunate," the Deputy Leader of the UNP, Karu Jayasuriya, said: "Parliament has met four times since April (when the newly-elected House was summoned). On all four days we have seen the deterioration. It is going from bad to worse."

The Opposition also blamed the ruling party for "assaulting two monks," a charge vehemently denied by the Government. "There was exchange of words, but no assault," Mr. Fernandopulle, a senior Minister in the UPFA Government, told another press conference.

On the hospitalised monks, Mr. Fernandopulle said: "Anyone can get hospitalised now," and maintained that "we did not assault them." Television news footage later broadcase on a privately owned channel showed the two monks in hospital, with "no external wounds, but possible internal injuries." The UNP said it did not know the nature of the injuries sustained by the monks, but condemned "the assault" by government MPs.

Call to reconsider LTTE ban

A Tamil National Alliance (TNA) Member of Parliament has appealed to the Indian government to reconsider its decision to extend the proscription of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) "We urge the Government of India to reconsider its decision to extend the ban on Liberation Tigers for another two years under the Unlawful Activities (prevention) Act," said Selvam Adaikalanathan, Tamil National Alliance (TNA) MP for Vanni in a request sent to the Government of India.

"While the efforts are being made with the support of international community to revive the peace talks between the Liberation Tigers and the Government of Sri Lanka it is only appropriate that the Government of India re-evaluates its decision.

"India's support and contribution are mandatory to the success of peace efforts in Sri Lanka. Tamil people believe that Government of India will extend its support to reach a just a fair solution to their struggle. However, India's decision to extend the ban has raised concerns within the Tamil community on India's committment towards helping Sri Lanka's warring parties reach a permanent solution. Liberation Tigers have always regarded India as a friendly power. They are actively working towards maintaining a cordial relationship with India," said Selvam Adaikalanathan his request.

According to a State Government Gazette publication on 21

May, Union Home Ministry of Government of India issued a notification on May 14 of its decision to extend the ban. The Central Government is of the opinion that because of the LTTE's continued violent and disruptive activities prejudicial to the integrity and sovereignty of India and its anti-India posture, besides posing a grave threat to the security of Indian nationals, it is necessary to declare the LTTE an unlawful association with immediate effect, the notification said.

The activities of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) continues to pose threat to, and are detrimental to, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India as also public order, according to a notification issued recently by the Union Home Ministry, extending the ban on the outfit.

The notification which was republished by the Tamilnadu government on 20 May said it is necessary to declare the LTTE an unlawful association because of its continued violent and disruptive activities prejudicial to the integrity and sovereignty of India and its strong anti-India posture besides posing a grave threat to the security of Indian nationals. Enquiries on the activities of the LTTE cadres and dropouts who have been traced out recently in Tamilnadu suggest that the cadres sent to Tamilnadu would ultimately be utilised by the LTTE for unlawful activities, the notification said.

The activities of pro-LTTE organisations and individuals have come to notice in India, despite the ban in force and attempts have been made by these forces to extend their support to the LTTE, the notification observed.

Besides, the LTTE continues to be an extremely potent, most lethal and well-organised terrorist force in Sri Lanka and has strong connections in Tamilnadu and certain pockets of southern India. The LTTE continues to use Tamilnadu as the base for carrying out smuggling of essential items like petrol and diesel, besides drugs to Sri Lanka.

Apart from the above reasons, the Central government also felt that the LTTE leaders have been cynical of India's policy on their outfit and reaction of the State manchinery in curbing their activities. The resolution passed in the Tamilnadu State Assembly to extradite the LTTE leader V Prabhakaran, evoked strong criticism from pro-LTTE elements in India and in Sri Lanka, the notification pointed out.

The LTTE's objective for a separate homeland (Tamil Eelam) for all Tamils threatens the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India, and amounts to ceding a part of the territory of India and thus fall within the ambit of an unlawful activity.

The turbulence in Sri Lanka is being exploited by pro-LTTE forces to draw support for the LTTE and its cause by taking out processions, demonstrations etc, in spite of the ban, causing disquiet and threat to the security of Tamilnadu.

Most of the criminal cases involving the LTTE and pro-LTTE groups like Tamil National Retrieval Troops (TNRT), Tamilnadu Liberation Army (TNLA) and Tamilar Pasarai, have ended in conviction but the Tamil Eelam concept still remains as a goal among the pro-LTTE groups in Tamilnadu, the notification added.

Journalist killing condemned

In continued killings in eastern Sri Lanka, Aiyathurai G. Nadesan, a provincial Tamil journalist, was shot dead by "unidentified gunmen" in Batticaloa town in the morning of 31 May.

"The body of Mr. Nadesan was found in a drain and was pulled out by civilians who then informed us," according to police sources from the eastern town of Batticaloa. The killing triggered renewed fears on the condition in the east, a region described by a human rights group as one that is "slipping into anarchy." Mr. Nadesan (50), an employee of the Inland Revenue Department, and a part-time correspondent for the *Virakesari* and some other external Tamil news organisations including the pro-LTTE International Broadcasting Organisation, is the sixth civilian to be shot dead since the March 2 rebellion by the former Batticaloa special commander of the LTTE, V. Muralitharan (Col. Karuna.). In addition, 21 LTTE members, seven supporters of Karuna and other police and Army informants have been killed, taking the toll to 36.

Police sources, who see the killing of the journalist as "a fallout of intra-LTTE fighting between the two rival factions of the LTTE", said the journalist had gone to the Inland Revenue Department in the morning and was later shot dead at 9.30 a.m., on his way back with a nine mm pistol. He succumbed to two gunshot injuries. While the identity of the killers has not been established, police said that "it is the LTTE. The ground situation points to nothing else. The only problem is, which faction."

Mr. Nadesan,s death had its own tragic note as his last column in the *Sunday Virakesari (30 May)*, focussed on the declining situation in Batticaloa. Pointing out that a total of 35 persons had been killed during the last 60 days in Batticaloa, he concluded his article on the note that it was the Tamils who were "becoming pawns" in the downward spiral of violence..

Those killed since the March 2 rebellion by Karuna include a candidate of the Tamil National Alliance, Rajan Sathiyamoorthy, on March 30, and a professor of the Eastern University, K. Thambiah (May 24).

The recent killings have raised a fresh spell of tension in Batticaloa. "Every week there is an incident. It is the LTTE, but it is difficult to establish which group is responsible," police said. The University Teachers for Human Rights, Jaffna, in their latest report said the LTTE's split "left no clear authority in place in Batticaloa, and mistrust all around." As there was a "vacuum, both sides began weeding out their opponents," and the "region began slipping into anarchy." An eastern Tamil journalist described the situation as "extremely disturbing."

The LTTE condemned the killing of Mr. Nadesan and lauded him as a journalist who "worked tirelessly for the rise of Tamil nationalism." The killing of "academics, journalists and the friendly forces of the Tamils" reflected the "atrocities" of those opposed to peace, the LTTE said and wanted "Government forces and its allies to stop such killings."

The continued spiral of deaths, according to sources, makes the east vulnerable to a sharp plunge into escalated violence.

Describing the eastern situation as "tense," a senior police officer said the killing of civilians who were seen as supportive of either of the LTTE or Karuna, raised a fresh sense of fear. "If it is only police or the intelligence who are targeted, the situation is different. Now no one knows who would be the targets." The eastern police have intensified checking and increased the number of checkpoints in the troubled district.

The eastern situation, however, appears set for a further downward spiral. "Batticaloa is not the same as it was before Karuna's rebellion," a defence observer is quoted as saying.

Meanwhile, the LTTE has at a meeting on 2 June agreed to "immediately establish direct liaison with the Sri Lanka Police" and assist in the "identification and apprehension of criminal elements" in the eastern Batticaloa area. At a meeting between the Tigers and the Sri Lanka Army, held by the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission in the wake of the rapidly-declining eastern situation, the two parties also agreed to arrange "regular coordination meetings" to focus on "developing joint actions through practical arrangements and mechanisms to identify, isolate and detain those responsible for the recent killings."

Killing condemned- Many media organisations, both within and outside Sri Lanka, have condemned the murder of journalist Nadesan. "We are outraged by the murder of Aiyathurai Nadesan and urge authorities to find and punish those responsible for this crime," the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) Executive Director Ann Cooper said.

Reporters Without Borders - Reporters sans frontières - (RSF), condemned the murder of the Tamil journalist in Batticaloa and voiced concern that dissension within the Tamil Tigers and existing tensions with the security forces could lead to an escalation of violence against the news media. "We call on the authorities to keep us informed of the progress in the investigation into this new crime against the press," the organisation said.

The Tamil Media Alliance (TMA) characterised the murder of Nadesan as a "Serious warning to all Tamil journalists, especially those working in the North East." "Journalist Nadesan is a founding member of Tamil Media Alliance and served as a vice president. While we express our condolences to members of Nadesan's family, we request all Tamil journalists to attend his funeral and pay respects to his services to the community," the TMA said.The Newspaper Society of Sri Lanka and the Editors' Guild of Sri Lanka have also condemned the killing of Journalist Aiyathurai Nadesan and called the government to carry out a full investigation. Their statement said, "The cold-blooded killing of Aiyathurai Nadesan, an award-winning senior journalist, has once again raised the ugly spectre of the vulnerability faced by media personnel in Sri Lanka, in the line of duty."

"Mr. Nadesan who was best known to the Tamil readership by his pen name Nellai G. Nadesan was honoured at the annual Journalism Awards for Excellence programme when he shared the Best Tamil Language Journalist for the Year 2000. His murder comes at a time when internecine guerrilla warfare is taking place despite an ostensible ceasefire agreement in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The dastardly attack on Mr. Nadesan once again highlights the difficulties and dangers posed to journalists, particularly to those serving in these troubled areas, in the conduct of their legitimate day-to-day duties of keeping the citizens informed," the statement said.

"The Newspaper Society of Sri Lanka and The Editors Guild of Sri Lanka are outraged by this incident and notes with deep regret the inability of the law enforcement agencies, for their failure so far, in apprehending the killers. It is also deeply concerned over the stoic silence maintained by the Government and the political leadership of this country on this matter. Our associations call upon the Government to conduct a detailed investigation into the killing of Mr. Nadesan, and to ensure the right of the journalist to practice their profession in whichever part of this country. Any attack on a journalist is an attack on Freedom of Expression and on Democracy. The murder of a journalist is a death-blow to these two foundations of a free society. The perpetrators of this crime, whoever they may be, deserve the condemnation of all freedom-loving citizens of this country, and must be brought to justice at the shortest possible time."

Eastern university don shot dead

Mr. Kumaravel Thambaiah, a senior lecturer in the Eastern University was shot dead by unidentified gunmen at his home in Batticaloa town around 4.30 p.m. 24 May. Mr.Thambaiah, 48, the head of the economics department of the Eastern University, is from the village of Aasikulam north of Vavuniya in northern Sri Lanka..

The gunmen had entered the lecturer's home in Gnanasooriyam Square in Batticaloa town from the rear and had shot him in the head and chest, Police said.

Mr. Thambaiah left Batticaloa following the defection by the renegade LTTE commander Karuna and returned when the Karuna group withdrew from the Batticaloa region and normalcy returned.

Born in Aasikulam in Vavuniya, Mr. Thambaiah graduated from the University of Jaffna with an honors degree in Economics, and for the past 14 years, he was at the Eastern University. At the time of his killing, in addition to heading the department of Economics, he was also the president of the University teachers' union. An academic who was dedicated to the University and teaching, he was admired and held in esteem by other lecturers as well as students. Mr. Thambaiah was also a founding member of the Tamil Renaissance Organization and the Batticaloa Education Development Council. In addition, he had held the position of President of the Batticaloa Multi-Purpose Cooperative Union.

The Eastern University community and the public in Batticaloa have expressed shock and dismay at the killing of the academic. White and black flags were seen at the Eastern University Tuesday to mourn the death of Mr. Thambaiah.

The shooting dead in front of his family of the university don in eastern Sri Lanka allegedly by cadres of renegade LTTE leader Karuna following a spate of killings in clashes between the two factions of the Tamil Tigers has raised the prospect of further killings and counter-killings.

Bishop of Batticaloa, Kingsley Swamipillai, who made valiant efforts to bring about a reconciliation between the two rebel factions before the eviction of Karuna from the East said, "A dangerous precedent has been set by the murder of professor Thambaiah. The series of killings in fights between the cadres of the two factions had already disturbed people. The murder of an academic of the caliber of Thambaiah has strengthened the impression that nobody is safe in this part of the country." He added that there should be unity among the Tamils before they attempt co-existing with other communities.

The constant fighting between factions of the LTTE is viewed as a major blow to the peace process. A former Defence Secretary is quoted as sying, "It is very unlikely the killing spree will come to an end immediately as the LTTE leadership is making no efforts to correct the fundamental discrepancies within the organization." He stressed that no measures have been taken to remove discrimination against the Eastern cadres. Hence, though the Eastern cadres may pretend they are loyal to Prabhakaran, they will continue to support Karuna, who they feel stood for their rights.

M.H.M. Navaz, a primary school teacher in Kathankudy in Batticoloa is quoted as sying, "Eastern Tamils still have a lot of respect for Karuna although he is no more the LTTE commander in the East. It is no secret that Batticaloa Tamils are treated as inferior by Jaffna (northern) Tamils. This discrimination exists in the LTTE as well and Karuna is the only one who fought it openly." He added, "As long as Karuna has the ground support no one can stop him from carrying out attacks against Prabhakaran's supporters.

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TNA MPs boycott NE PC Conference

June 10 - Tamil National Alliance (TNA) parliamentarians have decided to abstain from attending a meeting called by the Governor of NorthEast Province to discuss development activities for the Province. The decision to boycott the meeting was taken in Colombo following discussions with the LTTE leadership in Kilinochchi.

The LTTE suspects that recent initiatives directed by the President to spotlight activities of the NorthEast Provincial Council as an attempt on her part to weaken the claim by it for setting up the Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA) demanded by the Liberation Tigers. The LTTE has always resisted attempts by the Government in Colombo to undertake any development activities in the Northeast without the LTTE having a central role in any such work.

Provincial Council sources recently announced that the MPs representing the NorthEast were to be briefed about the development activities now being carried out by the North East Provincial Council (NEPC) administration at a two-day conference to be held in Trincomalee on June 10 and 11. NEPC Chief Secretary Mr.S.Rangarajah in an invitation to all NE parliamentarians said that a briefing programme has been organized on the direction of Provincial Governor Major General Asoka Jayawardene. "The objective of the briefing is to provide an understanding on the current programmes and activities carried out by NEPC to NE parliamentarians and to provide a forum to reflect on various development issues," said Mr.Rangarajah in the invitation.

According to the programme the Provincial Governor was to inaugurate the first day briefing session with his keynote address. In addition to welcome address, the Chief Secretary will speak on "Over View of NEPC activities". Thereafter provincial sectoral secretaries for Education, Health, Rehabilitation, Agriculture and Public Administration will present their reports on the performance of their respective sectors and future development proposals. On the second day briefing sessions, top officials of the World Bank (WB) funded North East Integrated Agricultural Project (NEIAP), North East Emergency Reconstruction Project (NEERP) and North East Housing Reconstruction Project (NEHRP), Asian Development Bank (ADB) funded North East Community Restoration Development (NECORD) project and Japan Bank of International Co-operation (JBIC) funded Pro Poor Economic Advancement Programme (PEACE) would submit their presentations regarding the implementation of development projects in the northeast province.

Parliamentarians of the northeast were expected make their comments at the end of these presentations by provincial secretraries and officials of NEIAP, NEERP, NEHRP, NECORD and PEACE projects.

A Senior TNA Member of Parliament is quoted as indicating that the meeting called by the NorthEast Governor was a step towards projecting the Provincial Council as a suitable administrative instrument for funnelling funds for NorthEast development and to urge the international community to start disbursing aid funds through the Provincial Council.

He had said that the TNA parliamentarians were seriously concerned of this development and would not participate in activities that will undermine the Tamil peoples' mandate for institutionalizing the ISGA.

The parliamentarians have requested the NorthEast Provincial Principal Secretary to postpone the meeting until they are able to determine the real motives for convening such a hurriedly scheduled meeting.

"Sri Lanka Government appears to think that by strengthening the NorthEast provincial council and Centre for Rehabilitation it could weaken LTTE's claim for ISGA and convince the International Community to start disbursing the allocated aid money. This back door diplomacy will not work. The mandate of 90% of NorthEast Tamils should be recognized and the Government can ignore Tamils demand only at its own peril," said Thinakkural, a popular Tamil daily in its editorial. While the peace process remains stalled, the Sri Lanka Government is suddenly showing interest in reviving the activities of the Northeast provincial council raising suspicions as to the motive behind the move, the paper added.

Norway accused of appeasing LTTE

SLMC leader Rauf Hakeem has gone public accusing Norway of jeopardising the peace process by ignoring his repeated calls for a separate Muslim delegation at the negotiating table.

Hakeem, in an interview with The Island (30 May), said that Norwegian facilitators "continue to ignore my reasonable request. In fact this is nothing new. We simply want Norway to ensure that the government and the LTTE keep their pledge. Unfortunately, the Norwegians have refused to take up the issue."

The SLMC raised this issue recently when Norwegian peace envoy Erik Solheim met with Hakeem. Hakeem said that he urged Solheim to pressurise the two principal parties to honour their pledge. According to Hakeem, Solheim did not agree with him. "Solheim insists they can only remind the government and the LTTE of this particular pledge," Hakeem said, underlining the danger in the Oslo's stand. The SLMC leader acknowledged his failure to convince the Norwegians. "This is ridiculous. What they say is they are not responsible for the Oslo declaration and the subsequent Tokyo declaration," he said. They guaranteed a place for a separate Muslim delegation as and when the negotiations resume and we expect the co-chairs (Norway, Japan, the US and the EU) of the Tokyo conference to keep their word, he said. Hakeem plans to make representations to the four co-chairs shortly.

Hakeem said that in the run-up to the last parliamentary elections in April, President Chandrika Kumaratunga and her allies repeatedly pledged to accommodate a separate Muslim delegation. "They wouldn't be allowed to side-step this issue," he said. Hakeem has also warned the Norwegians not to repeat the mistakes they made when facilitating a deal between the Palestinians and the then Israeli Labour government of Shimon Peres. The Oslo accord failed primarily because key stakeholders including Hamas and Hisbullah were kept out of the process. "What happened thereafter is blood drenched history," he said,

"We are an important party to the peace process here. No one can deny that fact," he said, while reiterating his call for a separate non-contiguous unit of devolution for the Muslims. "We want to ensure the safety and security of our people in the north-east and provide for self-governance within a united Sri Lanka."

Hakeem also endorsed the JVP's stand regarding the LTTE's hotly disputed proposal to set up an Interim self-governing Authority (ISGA) in the north-east. The JVP wants its UPFA partner (SLFP) to stand firm on their decision to have parallel talks on the ISGA and core issues. The LTTE has already rejected the government's proposal. Hakeem said that it was unfortunate the government and many foreign governments were only interested in appeasing the LTTE.

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LTTE urged to give up pre-condition

The partner in Sri Lanka's governing coalition, Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), has urged the international community to exert pressure on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to give up the "pre-condition" linking its proposal for an Interim Self Governing Authority in the northeast to resumption of peace talks which remains stalled since April 203 when the LTTE pulled out.

In the first public reaction to the recent statement by the island's international donors calling for recommencement of the peace talks, the JVP blamed the LTTE for the obstacles it had placed: "The Tiger organisation states there are no pre-conditions for discussions; on the other hand says they would not discuss anything other than proposals on an interim administration." The "main reason" for the delay, which perturbs the international community as well, is this "pre-condition," the JVP's Parliamentary group leader, Wimal Weerawansa, said in a statement.

The JVP, which holds 39 seats in the 225-member Parliament and is the second major party in the ruling United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) Government, also said "many countries, including India," had taken the stand that "an interim administration should be established only after a total agreement on the final solution."

The April 2 Parliamentary election, which swept the UPFA to power, Mr. Weerawansa said, was one in which the people "totally rejected" the previous administration's "peace process of fulfilling the avariciousness of the Tiger organisation."

Referring to the role of the international community, Mr. Weerawansa said the donors "should be able to request the Tiger organisation to withdraw the precondition on interim-administration." The LTTE pulled out of talks with the Wickremesinghe administration in April 2003 and stayed away from an international donors' conference held in Tokyo last June.

Alarm over explosive find

The police authorities in Colombo are said to be deeply concerned about explosives, grenades and a claymore mine fitted with a side charger found hidden under an oil pipe line running through a tunnel in the Grandpass area in Colombo.

On 18 May, shortly after midnight the Grand Pass police received a telephone call which was answered by the officer on duty, Sergeant Chadrasiri..

Speaking in fluent Sinhala, the caller asked for the officer in charge of the Intelligence unit by name, Ajith Peduruararchchi. The caller abruptly cut the line after informing Ajith Peduruararchchi that there were some explosives hidden under an oil pipe line running through a tunnel in the Grandpass area.

The police took the information seriously as this pipe line carries crude oil from the Colombo Port to the Sapugaskanda refinery. A police party was despatched to the scene who found two parcels hidden in the exact location given by the caller. With the assistance of the STF bomb squad, they opened up the two parcels. One of them wrapped in a Tamil newspaper contained six hand grenades. Wrapped up in a black bag was a claymore mine fitted with a side charger. The 7.6 kilos of explosives found in it included 3.45 kilograms of C4 - high velocity military plastic explosives. Tied to the bag was a tag in Tamil saying, 'owards the police side'.

These explosives - believed to be one of the biggest finds in Colombo since the signing of the ceasefire agreement – have now been handed over to the Government Analyst department.

An investigation into the find is now under way and SSP D.S. Lugoda who is heading the investigations said they are yet looking into who could have hidden it and for what purpose. However he said they were awaiting the report from the Government Analyst department to proceed with the investigations.

Death threat against journalist

A female radio journalist attached to the Tamil Broadcasting Corporation (TBC) in London has received a warning that she would end up receiving a bullet in her forehead if she did not give up her job with the TBC within two weeks, a report in the *Asian Tribune* said on 10 June. The journalist concerned is Ms. Shivanthi Sivasupramaniam, a leading Tamil Radio journalists and broadcaster and now attached to Tamil Broadcasting Corporation.

Shivanthi started her carrier as a Radio journalist in Sri Lanka in the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation with the *Vanampadi* services. A native of Chakachcheri and an old student of Hindu Girls College, Colombo, after arriving in London she joined the IBC Radio run and managed by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. After working for the IBC for an year-and-a-half, she left it and joined the *White Pigeon Organization* that functioned under Tamil Refugees Organization of the Tamil Tigers. Whilst attached to the *White Pigeon Organization* which was more or less a voluntary position, she joined to follow a broadcasting course and also joined the Tamil Broadcasting Corporation to continue with her broadcasting and journalistic career, the report said.

Tamil Broadcasting Corporation is one of the radio broadcasting stations in London and broadcast through Digital Hot bird Satellite on D/L12, 597 MHz S/R 27,500(V) to Europe, also streamed live on the Internet from this site.They also use to broadcast one hour daily slot to Tamil listeners in Sri Lanka channelled through the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation.

On 25 May, when M.S.Cegu Issadeen, Sri Lanka's Deputy Media Minister made an official visit to Jaffna, some people staged a protest against his visit and they also urged the government to stop the broadcasting arrangement with the Tamil Broadcasting Corporation through the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, the report said.

Shivanthi began to receive threatening telephone calls demanding her to resign from the TBC radio or face death. The latest threat to kill Shivanthi unless she gave up working with the TBC was delivered to her in the first week of June, the report alleged.

Shivanthi is reported to have said that she knew all those persons involved in the threatening campaign and their names, addresses and telephone numbers and she has given these details to TBC management with the request that if in case anything were to happen to her, to hand over those details to the police in London for necessary action.

Cross Currents

Sathya

Part I
Core Issues or ISGA?
A False Question

"Institutionalize ISGA, then the core issues can be discussed" was the headline in the LTTE Peace Secretariat website given to a lead news item as regards LTTE's position on the agenda for future talks, following the meeting that Norway's Special Envoy Erik Solheim had with Thamilselvan, the Head of LTTE's Political Wing on 26th May.

In further elaborating, Thamilselvan is quoted as saying, "institutionalizing the ISGA should take place first so that we can demonstrate to the people that their urgent humanitarian needs would be effectively met with by the ISGA".

Although the official position of the Government is not known at the time of writing this column, the LTTE website quotes Erik Solheim as saying that the "President is of the view that the discussion on ISGA proposals should take place parallel to the discussion on core issues". To digress a bit, the LTTE Peace Secretariat's added observation that "the Norwegian team agreed with the sentiments expressed by Mr. Tamilselvan" must clearly be an embarrassment to Norway, who continue to claim that they are only a postman and a facilitator and not a mediator.

Be that as it may, what is necessary to consider is not Norway's role, but the implications of "parallely vs stage-by-stage" debate that dominated the 1994-95 peace talks between the then Kumaratunga Government and the LTTE and which has now come back to haunt the on-going peace process.

The 1994-95 PA-LTTE Talks perhaps is the forum where the interconnectedness between Substance (or core issues) and Process were discussed extensively - but, with no agreement reached on the relative importance of each at a given conjuncture. To digress once again, that these "discussions" took place through a series of exchange of letters perhaps also underscores the importance of a neutral third party facilitator. To return to the theme of this column, the PA Government's position perhaps was most explicitly stated in the letter of 9th March 1995 by President Chandrika Kumaratunga to LTTE leader Velupillai Pirabhakaran, when the negotiations were already beginning to go awry.

To quote: "The government has also insistently stated that negotiations to (these matters) need not delay the commencement of political talks since the two could proceed parallely". The letter further proposed that "talks regarding the political settlement of the ethnic problem should commence on any dates between 2nd to 10th April...Our package of proposals for a political settlement would be sent to you in advance." These talks, of course never took place. The LTTE pulled out leading to the commencement of Eelam War 3, hence reinforcing the commonly held belief that the LTTE shuns negotiations on core political issues, since it would necessitate the public abandonment of its goal of a separate and a sovereign State of Tamil Eelam.

The LTTE's perspective on this issue, on the other hand, is best brought out by Anton Balasingham in his analysis of the 1994-95 talks in his book Duplicity in Politics: "...there was a total misreading in the government circles that the LTTE was avoiding political negotiations.... It was our concern that a permanent political settlement should satisfy the political aspirations of the Tamil people and also alleviate the apprehensions of the Sinhala masses. We knew this to be a difficult task. It would require a great deal of mutual dialogue; possibly over a long period of time. It was precisely for this reason we wanted the urgent day to day problems of the people to be addressed and resolved in the initial stages of the dialogue".

It is not the intention here to look into the pros and cons of the stance taken by both sides, then. What is relevant now is that the debate (i.e parallely or stage-by-stage) is once again occupying centre-stage in the peace process, except that this time around there is a concrete proposal by the LTTE to establish what it terms "An Agreement to Establish an Interim Self-Governing Authority for the NorthEast of the Island of Sri Lanka" or popularly known as the ISGA. The explicit purpose according to the proposal is to provide for the urgent needs of the people of the NorthEast relating to resettlement, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development in the North East.

However, what the LTTE refuses to concede in public is that its ISGA proposals go far beyond the task of setting up an appropriate institutional mechanism to absorb and disburse humanitarian assistance so as to address the day-to-day problems of the people of the NorthEast. On the contrary, the ISGA embodies core political issues and is in a sense a proto-model of both an autonomous State within a unified Sri Lanka or a separate and a sovereign State of Tamil Eelam. The ISGA proposals address issues that span "plenary power for the governance of the NorthEast" and "revenue raising including imposition of taxes, revenue, levies and duties, law and order, and over land", "separate institutions for the administration of justice", all expenditures in or for the NorthEast "shall be subject to the control of the ISGA", "powers to borrow internally and externally, provide guarantees and indemnities, receive aid directly, and engage in or regulate internal and external trade" and so on.

If all of the above are not core political issues relating to self-rule and autonomy, then what are core political issues? This clearly demonstrates that the debate between core political issues versus ISGA or the debate relating to addressing the causes of the conflict as opposed to the consequences of the conflict, in fact becomes a false debate. Paradoxically, the LTTE by placing its ISGA proposals has in effect brought the core political issues into agenda for talks, and the sooner it acknowledges this reality the better as far as the re-commencement of peace talks are concerned. Alternatively, the LTTE, if it wants an interim administration only

for the purpose of addressing the day-to-day problems of the people and related humanitarian and developmental activities, then its proposal for an interim administration should be so structured.

Likewise, if the UPFA Government insists on parallel negotiations on core political issues, then it has to reveal its package of proposals relating to devolution and regional autonomy. It is conceivable that the Government may well refer the LTTE to the devolution proposals spanning the 1995 August proposals to the 2000 Draft Bill. It is not clear, however, as to how JVP, a key constituent member of the UPFA, would respond to these sets of proposals.

A party that considers devolution to be obsolete and speaks only of decentralization of administration will have to go through the same process of transformation that the LTTE will have to undergo in being able to address the issue of self-rule and shared-rule within a transformed Sri Lanka State.

The same applies to the UNP which although remaining coy on the ISGA issue and despite the Oslo declaration on exploring federal structures has not taken a clear position on these vital issues.

So, how does one break the impasse?

Para 4 of the Preamble to the ISGA proposals in fact states that the LTTE is "Determined to establish an interim self-governing authority for the NorthEast region and to provide for the urgent needs of the people of the NorthEast by formulating laws and policies and, effectively and expeditiously executing all resettlement, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and development in the NorthEast, while the process for reaching a final settlement remains ongoing" (Italics mine).

This is a clear recognition of the reality that any interim arrangement can only be an integral part of a final negotiated political and a constitutional settlement to the Ethnic Question. Is this not a sufficient base to commence negotiations on the interim as well as the final? So why is the LTTE balking at stating the obvious and why is the Government excluding devolution from the brief given to Advisory Committee on Constitutional reforms, if it is committed to negotiating on core political issues?

The answer to Sathya is obvious. The principal parties in the history of our past attempts at a negotiated settlement are invariably the principal culprits in violating all the norms and rules of principled negotiations. To Sathya principled negotiations is all about firstly knowing one's own interests and then placing them at the table up-front, so that both sides know exactly what they are negotiating about and why.

In the context of a lack of either clarity or a surfeit of duplicity on both sides, a dignified and a just peace will remain elusive to all peoples of this country.

Part II

SLMM and the killings in East

The cowardly killing of Aiyadurai Nadesan a reputed political columnist, writer and a Tamil nationalist, is yet another act of brutality in the ongoing serial internecine killings that plagues the Batti-Amparai region, following the split in the LTTE. These killings have generated both a fear psychosis as well as revulsion amongst the people, with neither the Vanni-based leadership nor the Karuna faction paying heed to these concerns and condemnations.

It is meaningless looking into who started it first, although it is no secret that the Vanni-based LTTE leadership did choose to resort to the force of arms to quell dissent from Karuna and his rank and file in the Batti-Amparai region.

Although the initial victims in the bloodletting, following the move by the Vanni-based LTTE leadership to wrest control of the Batti-Amaparai region from the Karuna faction, were the functionaries and cadres on both sides, the victims in the recent spate of killings are what could be termed as "soft targets". These soft targets include a politician (Sathyamurthy), an academic (Thambiah) and a journalist (Nadesan), while a senior bureaucrat (Maunaguruswamy) and another academic (Thirchelvam) survived an assassination attempt. The "soft targets" also include pauperized sections of society as well as former members, whose only mistake may have been to give food and shelter or provide information to this or that faction of the LTTE under duress and paid a heavy price as a result.

That, in all these cowardly acts, both the LTTE as well as the breakaway Karuna faction were involved is beyond any doubt. In this bloodletting, there is also an interesting difference in the propaganda and rhetoric adopted by both sides. On the part of the LTTE, it has consistently claimed that the perpetrators of these killings are the military and Tamil paramilitary groups. There is almost an aversion at pointing the finger directly at Karuna's group, lest this belies its claim that the Batti-Amaparai region has been cleared of the Karuna menace. Further, in those cases where the LTTE is the perpetrator, it adopts its usual stoic silence, while allowing its media fronts to do the necessary justification, cover-up or plain news blackout in the Tamil media. The Karuna faction on the other hand appears to be falling over backwards in a might hurry to either claim responsibility for some of these killings or justifying them, so as to register their presence on the ground to the public as well as the international community.

In all this the role of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission is typically ambivalent. When the LTTE went on the rampage last year by resorting to an orgy of political killings of its adversaries who do not recognize them as the sole representatives, as well as Tamil members of the Sri Lankan intelligence, the SLMM took the position that they came within the ambit of a law and order problem and not a violation of the ceasefire agreement and, therefore, was not within its mandate. However, in the present spree of killings where the supporters of Vanni-based LTTE had suffered more at the hands of the Karuna faction, as Nadesan pointed out in his last article in the Sunday Veerakesari, the SLMM has suddenly begun expressing horror at the barbaric killings.

They have also secured the commitment of the LTTE to track down the "criminal" elements. It is to its credit that Norway has suddenly woken-up, although it may have prevented the killings in the past had they done so then. It now remains to be seen as to how the SLMM would respond when the Vanni-based LTTE leadership unleashes its counter- retaliatory killings (if there is such a

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term) against soft targets in the endless orgy of killings and counter-killings. The recent firing on devotees at a Hindu temple in Batticaloa and the decapitating of two persons who were abducted from the temple is indicative of the anarchy prevailing in the Batti-Amparai region is a case in point.

Another factor which needs close scrutiny is the Sri Lankan security apparatus in the Eastern province. The killings, in particular, of Thambiah, the don from Eastern University and Nadesan in the heart of Batticaloa, widely believed to be the work of the Karuna faction, have led to allegations of complicity in the killings by the military-intelligence apparatus.

Whether it is true or not, it is somewhat naïve to assume that the security personnel would be unhappy about the internecine killings. When the politicians and policymakers in Colombo associated with the peace process under the UNF Government (with temptations on the part of the UPFA government to follow suit) were not too disturbed about handing over the Tamil people to the LTTE as their "sole representative" (and may have even cynically thought to themselves, "they deserve each other in any case"), one cannot rule out the temptation on the part of the security apparatus to fish in troubled waters.

Be that as it may, Tamil society continues to be bedevilled by internecine and fratricidal killings. It has spread like cancer and has eroded the very legitimacy of the struggle for justice and equality vis-a-vis the Sri Lanka State. The LTTE, including its alienated Karuna faction, continue on the path of nihilism of destroying everything that stands in its way. The Tamil people, despite the military might of the LTTE and their sabre-rattling proxies in parliament, are becoming increasingly orphaned and powerless. Other ex-militant groups who have entered the so called democratic mainstream are yet to go beyond being half-democrats with ambitions of becoming the sole alternative to the sole representative.

Their failure in projecting a common democratic front to the LTTE proxies is a case in point. The notion that "if you are not one of us, then you are a traitor" is what consumed the lives of Tamil intellectuals and political activists who were committed to ensuring the dignity, security and socio-economic advancement of the People of the North-East, along with the Peoples of other regions.

The list is far too long to be cited in this column. In fact it may need a separate column to merely list out the names. Pluralism and political diversity has become an anathema to those who claim to struggle for emancipation and justice. It is also a contradiction that will continue to dog Tamil nationalism in its struggle against Sinhala chauvinism. Tamil nationalism is fast losing its high moral ground. Perhaps it already has and is fast decaying.

Aiyadurai Nadesan (or G.Nadesan as he signed off his columns in the Veerakesari) loved his People more than his pen. He was more a Tamil nationalist than a journalist. Hence he embodied all the contradictions contained in Tamil nationalism. The Tiger flag placed across his body at the funeral perhaps epitomizes this contradiction. As D.B.S.Jeyaraj observed about Nadesan in his column in the Sunday Leader, "His comments too never go to the extent of unbridled LTTE sycophancy like some others, since he himself is a Tamil nationalist and much of what he wrote was from that perspective....Since he was a 'pro-Tiger' due to compulsion rather than conviction, he sometimes took on a 'Tigerish' line. This was the case with many journalists in his position."

Sathya couldn't agree more. Yet, whatever be the contradictions, Nadesan had the right to live and write as he thought fit, in keeping with his conscience.

That right was denied to him by his assassins.

Part III

Chandrika TNA talks

The meeting that President Chandrika Kumaratunga had with members of the Tamil National Alliance on the night 10th June was eventful, to say the least. The first indicator of the seriousness of the talks was that the President did not keep them waiting (for too long) and that the meeting went on till around mid-night. That was certainly a good beginning. The second indicator was the responsible and an objective account of what transpired at the meeting given to the media by the TNA spokesperson R.Sampanthan, who is usually more prone to theatrics.

And, basically what transpired was that Chandrika Kumaratunga had agreed to commence negotiations with the LTTE, centered around the LTTE's ISGA proposals, despite some reservations about the LTTE proposals for an interim mechanism for the North-East. The President, according to R.Sampanthan, had further indicated that negotiations on the core political issues will have to be taken up for negotiations at some stage, in the not too distant future. The above account was confirmed by the President in her address to the Nation on 12th night. She said that while the Government was committed to a dialogue with the LTTE on a lasting solution (read "core issues"), the Government was also ready to discuss with the LTTE interim measures (read "ISGA proposals") that addresses the urgent need for development work in the North and East.

The green light given by the LTTE to the TNA to go ahead with the meeting with President Kumaratunga and Mr. R.Sampathan's responsible rendition of the broad areas discussed to the media, despite attempts by our favourite morning telephone talk show moderator in the electronic media to ask him and Gunadasa Amerasekera the usual provocative and leading questions aimed more at embarrassing the UPFA Government than in enlightening the public of events and analysis, augurs well for the recommencement of peace talks between the Government and the LTTE. In this, the media has a responsible role to play as a custodian and watchdog, rather than as an agent provocateur.

Mr Sampanthan, of course, also had to engage in the public posturing that invariably goes parallel with negotiations. The Tamil Net cited the TNA spokesperson of having raised issues relating to the High Security Zones, the Prevention of Terrorism Act and that "the Tamils couldn't be deceived any more by the Sinhala

political leadership". The Daily News of 12th June, on the other hand, in an inspired leak reported that Government sources said that the talks with the TNA were "cordial and constructive" and that "as a sequel to the discussions, the Government was 'cautiously optimistic' that direct talks would resume soon and that direct talks with the LTTE would be resumed soon and the peace process would go forward".

But, this is only the beginning and there is a long way to go before we can go to sleep - including Sathya. The cynics would argue that Chandrika Kumaratunga's move has an ulterior motive. The motive being the need to neutralise the TNA members in parliament and secure their support to her Government, or at least prevent its collapse. But, then it is motives and enlightened self-interest that galvanizes people into action. In that, it could also be argued that the Government was also galvanized into action by the communiqué of 1st June issued by the Sri Lanka donor Co-Chairs (i.e. the United States, the European Union, Japan and Norway) following their review meeting in Brussels. The Joint Press Release, began with the rather ominous tone, "in a world of competing crises, Sri Lanka Co-chairs came together and urged in the strongest possible terms a rapid resumption of the peace negotiations so that Sri Lanka can benefit from the generosity of the international community. They noted that, with so many other demands on donors, donor attention and funding might go elsewhere unless the peace process makes progress".

While the above operative section in the Joint Press Release of the Co-Chairs was a clear signal to the Government, it is also clear that a strong signal was sent to the LTTE, both, in relation to human rights as well as the need for a pragmatic interim-interim arrangement for the North-East, till such time as negotiations conclude on the LTTE's ISGA proposals. In addition to the ritualistic call on the LTTE to cease recruitment of children, not to mention the problem of re-recruitment of children following their demobilization by Karuna, and to release all remaining "underage soldiers", the Co-Chairs appear to have recognized the reality that the ISGA Proposals do not contain the ingredients for a speedy agreement between the two parties. In its concluding paragraph, the Co-Chairs noted that "until effective administrative structures are in place in the North and East, the Co-Chairs encouraged the parties to agree on the establishment of effective delivery mechanisms for donor-financed development activities in the North-East". (read "interim-interim measures")

However, where the Co-Chairs are unclear is as to what they exactly mean by "progress" in the peace talks. The fact of the matter is that the two parties (i.e. the Government and the LTTE) have different perceptions of "progress". To the LTTE, progress implies institutionalizing the ISGA and ensuring absolute control over the North-East for a protracted period. The "core" issue to the LTTE is precisely this, while the task of addressing the causes of the conflict has become more academic in view of its self-projection as a 'state-in-the-making'. To the UPFA Government, "progress implies addressing the core issues (i.e. the causes of the conflict) as a means of forging a durable and a permanent settlement that would eventually lead to the demilitarization and demobilization of the LTTE.

The paradox, as Sathya pointed out in an earlier column, is that while the ISGA proposals of the LTTE contain all the elements of the 'core' issues relating to self-rule for the North-East, but bereft of shared rule, the UPFA has embarked on a process of constitutional reforms in the South that is bereft of core issues (i.e. Self-rule and devolution of power to the North-East).

This contradiction must surely make the Co-Chairs swivel in their chairs!

But, as President Chandrika Kumaratunga observed in her address to the Nation, there is a "coincidence of interests" between the Government and the LTTE and it is perhaps this which may yet lead to a breakthrough - or a speedy collapse, after the coincidence of interests reach their maturity and the conflicts of interest resurface.

Be that as it may, confidence building measures, such as the meeting between CBK and TNA, should be intensified, while the fears and apprehensions of other political formations in the North-East and the South should be addressed and allayed through parallel negotiations aimed at making the process truly inclusive and durable. On its part, the LTTE should abandon its dubious claim to be the sole representative of the Tamil People and cease its attempts at establishing its hegemony over Tamil polity and society through the silencing and annihilation of dissent, and the denial of political diversity and pluralism through violence. Likewise, the security apparatus should stop fishing in troubled waters aimed at exacerbating internecine conflicts and rivalries within the Tamil movement.

But if all this can be achieved, then where is the problem? This is where Sathya is prone to the criticism that his advocacy is replete with idealism and bereft of real politic and pragmatism. It also raises an interesting debate on choice and free will, on the one hand, and fate and determinism, on the other.

The answer lies concealed in a discourse between a sage and his disciple on an inquiry into fate and free will that Sathya came across recently. To paraphrase the conclusion that the sage and his disciple reached through their dialectical conversation: "The problem of conflict will be solved only at the end of conflict. But at that time the problem will have ceased to have any practical significance. Not only so, it will cease to exist. In other words, before the conflict begins, the problem is incapable of solution and, after the conflict ends, it is no longer necessary to find solution."

Likewise.the debate as to whether the ISGA (not to be confused with interim-interim) or the Core Issues should come first is as fruitless as embarking on the inquiry as to the relative strength of fate and free will. Since, they are in fact one and the same. Any takers for this Sathya riddle? ❑

Behind the dispute in resuming peace talks

Dr. S. Narapalasingam

The efforts to resume the stalled peace talks between the GOSL and the LTTE were initiated by President Chandrika Kumaratunga on April 22. The reasons for the withdrawal of the LTTE from the talks April last year were said to be the previous government's failure to fulfill the promises given and imple ment the agreements relating to the restoration of normality in the North-East. The exclusion of the LTTE at the preparatory meeting held March last year in Washington D.C. ahead of the Tokyo Aid Group meeting in June was also another reason. The extent of the disappo intment of the Tiger leadership with the peace talks was evident from the statement of LTTE's political wing leader S.P. Thamilselvan, who described the six rounds of talks held since September 2002 in foreign countries – Thailand, Norway, Germany and Japan as time wasted.

The LTTE was initially willing to resume talks from the stage where these were suspended provided the discussions are confined to the establishment of an interim adminis tration. The proposals submitted by the previous government for inte rim administrative arrangements to implement projects for reconstru ction, rehabilitation and developm ent of the war-battered North and East were considered by the LTTE to be ineffective to meet the urgent needs of the people. The Tigers put forward their set of proposals on 31 October 2003 in a comprehensive form that in essence meant the setting up of an autonomous all-powerful Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA) under their control.

The proposed ISGA with sweeping powers going beyond the present administrative structures and designed to function independently outside the control of Parliament in Colombo was not considered favourably by both the previous government and the opposition parties. While the UNF government expressed their concern over the ISGA proposals, both the SLFP and the JVP the two major constituents in the present UPFA government rejected the proposals as totally unacceptable.

The Joint Statement signed by the then Sri Lankan Premier Ranil Wickremesinghe and his Indian counterpart Atal Bihari Vajpayee stated: "Any interim arrangement should be an integral part of the final settlement". Ranil Wickremesinghe made this statement during an official visit to New Delhi before the LTTE unveiled its ISGA proposals. India will support a settlement based on a federal structure acceptable to all sections of the Sri Lankan society and which guarantees the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. Many analysts have observed that the ISGA proposals assume an inbuilt structure that is not federal by any stretch of imagination.

The present dispute

Following the telephone conversation President Kumaratunga had with the Norwegian Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik on April 22; the swift efforts made by the Norwegian facilitators to restart the peace talks appeared to bear fruit. Incidentally, April 22 was the day the new UPFA minority government elected at the April 2 parliamentary elections failed to get its nominee elected as speaker of the House. The resumption of the talks with the LTTE on the basis of the ISGA proposals as stipulated by them looked imminent. The London-based LTTE's chief negotiator and theoretician Anton Balasingham, who participated in the talks about talks with the Norwegian facilitators in Wanni announced that the date and venue for the talks between the GoSL and the LTTE would be announced in two days time. But this did not happen and either party gave no reason.

Iqbal Athas, the Sunday Times defence editor in his weekly column on June 6 has mentioned briefly the facts that led to the difficulty in agreeing to the four-point proposal the Norwegian facilitators gave the government and the LTTE after consultations with both sides. According to this plan, "the agenda for the peace talks will include all matters relating to the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement and the establishment of an Interim Authority (Interim Self Governing Authority)". The response of the UPFA government to this four-point proposal as stated by Athas: "Any agreed Interim Authority will bear the contours of a final solution to the ethnic conflict taking into account the Oslo statement and the Tokyo declaration." Thus, the case was put forward for parallel discussions on the ISGA proposals and the core issues; the latter on agreement will determine the new structure on which the final settlement of the conflict should be based.

The controversy that is delaying a decision on announcing the date for resuming the talks is whether the talks should be solely on the basis of the ISGA proposals or along with the core issues that will determine the future structure of the State. The final settlement must necessarily be based on this structure.

President's stand appears to be in line with the constitutional bill presented by her in 2000. It was envisaged that the implementation of an interim administration would be only at the final stage of talks after the agreement on the structure of the State has been reached. This meant "an interim administration will be established only as an integral part of the final solution" which has also been the position of the UNP leader during his term as Prime

Minister. This has been the thinking of his Indian counterpart Atal Bihari Vajpayee too as seen from the joint statement referred to earlier.

At the meeting Sri Lanka's foreign affairs minister Lakshman Kadirgamar had with India's new foreign minister Natwar Singh in New Delhi on 31 May the latter reiterated: "India was committed to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Sri Lanka in the federal system". He said India wanted a negotiated settlement that satisfied "all sections of society" in Sri Lanka. It is clear from various statements of the leaders of the new coalition government led by Dr. Manmohan Singh of the Congress(I) party, India's stand on Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict has not changed much. No group in Sri Lanka however powerful can sensibly ignore India's concerns over Sri Lanka's make-up as a sovereign state.

Self-rule before final settlement

Norway's special envoy Erik Solheim returned to Colombo on May 24 to bridge the gulf between the stands of the two sides on the basis for resuming the peace talks. At the meeting he had with S.P. Thamilselvan in Kilinochchi on May 26, the Tigers rejected Government's plan to hold parallel talks. They want the talks on self-rule to take place and the ISGA is institutionalized first before any discussion is commenced on the 'core issues' and final settlement.

Thamilselvan reportedly told the Norwegian envoys, "Institutionalizing the ISGA should take place first so that we can demonstrate to the people that their urgent humanitarian needs would be effectively met with by the ISGA". At this stage, the LTTE wanted the government to accept the ISGA as a concept and discuss the specifics with the view to institutionalizing it. The LTTE's stand on self-rule has been hardening over time as seen from the following analysis.

Divisions within the southern polity

The ambiguous stand of the UNP, the main opposition party under the leadership of former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe on the UPFA government's intended approach to peace talks with the LTTE suggests that the unhelpful party politics will continue to be a major obstacle to the success of the renewed peace efforts. After the Norwegian peace envoy Erik Solheim briefed Ranil Wickremesinghe on May 5 on the discussions he had earlier with President Kumaratunga and the leaders of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) and the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), the opposition leader was reported to have told the envoy that his party would not oppose the peace talks resuming at the point at which they were suspended. But on May 13, the former Minister for Constitutional Affairs in the UNF government and the head of the negotiating team Prof. G. L. Peiris, who is presently a spokesperson of the opposition party told a news conference: "We are not going to support the sham of the UPFA. It is using the

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peace process as a ruse to make up a parliamentary majority and to obtain much-needed funds from donor countries."

Ironically, the then opposition party accused the previous government that it was using the peace process for achieving its narrow political objectives. The main aim was said to be to win the general elections on the strength of stopping the war and restoring peaceful conditions in the south. Because of the non-availability of aid pledged by donors, it was unable to deliver the peace dividend as planned. Prof. Peiris by comparing the present and previous stands of the coalition led by the President has also raised doubts about the UPFA government's sincerity in its move to resume the peace talks. He was particularly critical of the present government's turnaround from the stand it took when the party was in the opposition. At the same time the UNP wants the two main partners SLFP and the JVP in the coalition government to settle their differences on the peace process. This, of course, requires compromising their earlier positions!

On May 19 at a press briefing in the parliamentary complex, UNP parliamentarian Rajitha Senaratne said his party "unconditionally supports the government in its attempt to achieve permanent peace in the country. But the parties in the coalition government have yet to come to a common agreement regarding the peace negotiations". The party's spokespersons told the press the government must hold internal discussions among the constituent parties before resuming peace talks with the LTTE. Subsequently, the UNP's organizing secretary, parliamentarian S.B. Dissanayake at a press conference in Kandy on June 6 said his party is prepared to extend its support for the government's peace efforts, if the JVP's support is not forthcoming. It is rather strange the UNP is telling the government what it should do before talking with the Tigers, while not declaring its own position on the issues that are hindering the resumption of peace talks. All the parties say they are concerned about the country's future but it is their contradictory actions and often inaction that are endangering the future of the country.

The two main parties, the UNP and the SLFP have accepted the December 5, 2002 Oslo declaration. The statement issued by the Royal Norwegian Government at the end of the third round of peace talks in Oslo stated: "Responding to a proposal by the leadership of the LTTE, the parties agreed to explore a solution founded on the principle of internal-self determination in areas of historical habitation of the Tamil-speaking peoples, based on a federal structure within a united Sri Lanka. The parties acknowledged that the solution has to be acceptable to all communities."

Donors' concern and warning

Citing the Tokyo Declaration, the donors continue to insist that the pledged funds will be released only if progress is seen in the negotiations for a durable solution to the internal conflict. They have urged the two sides to resume the suspended talks soon and move forward towards a final settlement.

The Tokyo Declaration stated: "The Conference encourages the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE to enter into discussions as early as possible on a provisional administrative structure to manage the reconstruction and development aspects of the transition process. The process would need the expeditious development of a roadmap with clear milestones indicating the path towards a mutually acceptable final political solution." Thus the donors too want the interim arrangement to be linked to the final settlement.

At the recent review meeting of co-chairs of the Tokyo conference on Reconstruction and Development of Sri Lanka (the US, the EU, Japan and Norway) held on June 1 in Brussels, it was reiterated that the disbursement of pledged aid to Sri Lanka would speed up if peace talks resumed. "Development assistance would inevitably increase as the negotiations made progress," their statement added. So far only a tiny fraction of the pledged $4.5 billions has been released to meet immediate humanitarian and reconstruction needs.

The meeting noted that a peace settlement could only be sustained, if it respected the legitimate rights and involvement of all ethnic groups, preserved the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and was based on the principles of democracy and human rights. The co-chairs warned with so many other demands on donors, donor interest and funding might go elsewhere unless the peace process made progress. They expect the agreed modalities to permit a Muslim delegation to participate at the peace talks "at an appropriate time for the deliberations on relevant substantive political issues". The donors also called for a halt to the recent spate of killings in the east and urged the Tigers to release all remaining underage soldiers in their ranks. External pressure has had little impact so far on easing the positions taken by both sides and going by past experience the LTTE is not likely to yield to the pressure of donors. Apparently, securing political power takes precedence over development to the LTTE. The Tigers have good reason to think their case for controlling powers will be weakened if the priority is the other way round.

The statement released by the European Commission's Directorate General for External Relations on June 1 at the end of the donor co-chairs meeting noted: "The peace process and the development process are mutually reinforcing and interlinked, as agreed in the Tokyo Conference last year. As such, the Co-chairs stressed that there should be no drift and no delay in resuming and taking forward the peace process." Like many others, the donors too have not recognized the different objectives of the peace process

from the government's and LTTE's perspectives.

Different perspectives

The Tigers consider the conflict to be between two independent politico-military entities that have agreed to suspend military operations having realized that outright military victory is not achievable by either side. Hence negotiations for ending the conflict should focus on how controlling powers will be exercised by the two establishments. Many analysts have assumed the negotiation is for arriving at a power-sharing arrangement since the LTTE has agreed to the concept of a united Sri Lanka. A confederation or an alliance of two nations could also be consistent with this concept. This view seems to be the position of the LTTE since its leadership wants not only plenary power for the governance of North and East but also wants to retain their armed forces. What the Tigers would appear to be seeking now is an arrangement (interim or permanent) for them to exercise more or less exclusive control of all aspects of governance over the land and sea in the North-east without Government's interference.

As far as the Tigers are concerned, since no other party has been directly involved in the struggle for self-rule, the need for the involvement of a third party in the talks does not arise, particularly when the discussion topic is the division/sharing of the controlling powers between the two parties to the conflict. The Tigers have pointed out time and time again that it is their cadres who sacrificed their lives in pursuit of their goal – a separate autonomous state in the N-E region. They are not interested in the causes that led to the conflict but in the settlement of the dispute over controlling powers in the North-East.

The alternative viewpoint is multi-ethnic Sri Lanka has an ethnic problem centered on majority-minority division, which arose and intensified over the years as a result of the denial of equal rights to minority Tamils and discriminatory policies and practices of successive governments since independence. The governments with powers acquired under majority rule dominated by Sinhalese have also been insensitive to the aspirations and concerns of other ethnic groups. From this standpoint, there is a strong case for including other concerned parties, especially the Muslim community in the negotiations for a political settlement. Muslims constitute nearly a third of the population in the Eastern province.

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After two decades of intense war, the urgent need to restore normalcy and improve the living conditions of the people in the tattered region is acknowledged by all. The Tigers want a two-stage approach where as Dr. Jayadeva Uyangoda in his recent article has mentioned, "the first stage of negotiations should result in an agreement to institutionalize arrangements for the normalization of life in the North and East". The LTTE by linking this to the proposed ISGA claiming no other arrangement in which the government also provides inputs would be able to meet the needs of the people has created confusion between the core and consequential issues. When Dr. Uyangoda states, "the envisaged 'interim period' of normalization should create conditions conducive for resolving the 'core issues' of the ethnic conflict", he too has considered the conflict from the alternative viewpoint. The paradox here is the LTTE's two-stage and President Kumaratunga's single stage approaches contradict with their perceptions of the conflict.

LTTE's raison d'être

In an interview with Sunday Leader (23 May 2004) LTTE Political Wing Leader, S.P. Thamilselvan said: "The concept of an internal interim administration for the north east is based purely on the premise that the final resolution of the national conflict cannot be resolved within the parameters of the existing constitution and therefore the necessity arose to introduce a mechanism that can in the interim cater to the urgent humanitarian needs of a nation, of our people". Replying to a related question he said: "We are conscious of the fact that the government, the incumbent government does not have the sufficient majority to bring about amendments with the two third majority necessary to change the constitution". This reason was also given by the Tigers to postpone discussions on final settlement during talks with the previous government.

LTTE's strategic move to avoid talks on a final settlement is nothing new. Anton Balasingham in his book 'Duplicity in Politics' based on the 1994-1995 'peace- talk' experiences has explained the insurmountable problem in reaching a negotiated political settlement that "satisfy the political aspirations of the Tamil people and also alleviate the apprehensions of the Sinhala masses". Moreover, despite the regular change of governments the contentious and acrimonious political party rivalry continues to be a stumbling block to the resolution of the burning national issue. Ironically, the Sinhala polity is pushing the LTTE towards unilateral action by giving importance to power politics rather than to national politics.

The LTTE has understandable apprehension to believe they could be deceived if they agree to put off the demand for self-rule to the second stage. Already the Tiger loyalists are said to be opining: "We have been betrayed by the peace process. We may have to resume fighting." The decision of LTTE's proxy the TNA to boycott a meeting called by the Governor of the NorthEast Province to discuss development activities in the area reflects their suspicions that the government is trying to demonstrate the N-E Provincial Council is a suitable administrative instrument that can be used for expediting the urgent relief work. The Tigers think this would undermine their demand for institutionalizing the ISGA. The challenge confronting Sri Lanka's leaders is to find a practical compromise that can serve as an effective arrangement to meet the immediate needs of the people in the North-East and as "a bridge towards a final settlement."

On the invitation of the President, 20 TNA parliamentarians of the LTTE's proxy the TNA' met her June 10 for discussions on the dispute over the basis for restarting the stalled peace talks. According to the statements given by the TNA members to foreign news agencies, the President has agreed to discuss the ISGA proposals "without any precondition." The media close to the Tigers reported that the TNA delegation had told the President - "Tamils couldn't depend any more on the Sinhala political leadership to enjoy their rights. The ISGA should be established in the northeast without delay so that Tamils could enjoy self rule in their homeland." There is considerable confusion on the latest stands of both sides on the basis for resuming the talks. It is unclear whether the LTTE wants the ISGA to be established straightaway without discussions or discuss the proposals without discussing the 'core issues' and set up the ISGA immediately. There has so far been no announcement on any such specific matters from the Presidential Secretariat. There are many valid reasons for avoiding hasty conclusions before the talks actually begin.

Final comments

The UPFA government despite persistent efforts since April 2 has not yet proved it has even a simple majority in Parliament. Infighting over procedural matters has been the hallmark of the few sittings held so far. Unless there is a national government that includes the two main parties, the UNP and the SLFP or at least a firm understanding between them on the future political system and structure, resolution of the conflict by continuing with the negotiation process along the restricted line started by the previous government is bound to end in a stalemate at some point. Above all peace must reign in the House even to ponder a joint effort to seek a negotiated political settlement and bring about unity and lasting peace in the entire country.

Dr. Sumantra Bose, the author of the book 'States, Nations, Sovereignty: Sri Lanka, India and the Tamil Eelam Movement', in a recent interview with the Daily Mirror mentioned that in Sri Lanka history is repeating itself with both the major parties undermining each other amidst pressure mounting

from alternate groups such as the Buddhist monks as it happened in the mid 1950's. Similarly, in the northern Tamil political arena too there appears to be a historical repetition as in the late 70's when the Tamil politician's used the democratic process by getting overwhelmingly elected to parliament in order to argue a case for self determination. He said: "What the LTTE has had, in my view, is a strategic shift somewhere between an ideological shift and a tactical shift. An ideological shift is not realistic in the immediate term by a maximalist organization of the nature of the LTTE. The LTTE's role in the peace process is more than 'play acting' and thus is more than a tactical shift."

By drawing parallel with the unresolved conflict in Northern Ireland and the ongoing peace process, he has said "it is possible for a peace processes to progress without the protagonist (Sinn Fein) making an ideological shift. But it is essential that the process needs to appear progressive and not as in the Middle East conflict drag on without basic issues being dealt with." From the long-term interests of all Tamils in Sri Lanka, it is important that the basic issues are discussed at the talks and not shunned.

The LTTE leaders themselves have said that their ISGA proposals fall outside the parameters of the present constitution. They have not indicated how these could be implemented without suitable amendments to the Constitution. In their view, this is a matter for the government and the opposition parties to settle.

Any discussion on the ISGA proposals will entail discussion on the core issues. The discussions cannot be concluded within a short period for the very same reasons given by the LTTE to postpone discussions on key political issues. This is a catch 22 situation. The TNA has urged the European Union not to release funds for development until the ISGA is established and has been canvassing foreign diplomats and visiting envoys for the implementation of the ISGA proposals. How will this strategy help to avoid discussions on the core issues? Will this force the government to accept the ISGA proposals without discussion? The statements made by the TNA members after the meeting with the President on June 10 indicate that the latest thinking of the Tamil leadership is somewhat along this line. If the real intention is to foil attempts to a negotiated political settlement, this seems to make some sense.

It is the urgent need to obtain the pledged foreign aid that is likely to sway towards expediting the process of setting up an interim administration (IA) as recommended by the donors in the Tokyo declaration. But it is farfetched to think that the donors favour the move to set up the ISGA without discussion.

Since the 'core issues' as men-tioned before are in the ISGA proposals, the government could relax its stand on having parallel discussions on the ISGA proposals as well as on the 'core issues', If an agreement on the future structure of the state could be reached via the discussions on the ISGA proposals, the setting up an interim administration according to the new structure is possible by adopting an interim constitution for the interregnum. However, no one can realistically expect the discussion on the ISGA proposals to end soon with a compromise blueprint. If both sides are not wiling to modify con-siderably their extreme positions, it is the people who will be paying the price for their intransigence.

After the internationalization of the peace process following the 2002 ceasefire agreement and the recent split in the LTTE with the renegade Karuna group active in Batticaloa accompanied by the loosening of the link (formed following the marginalization of minority Tamils) between the Tamils in the North and the East, resuming the war is not an easy option for either side. Unlike in Northern Ireland, the post-conflict situation in Sri Lanka requires vast amount of funds for reconstruction, resettlement, rehabilitation and development. Both sides need the support of the donor community to provide relief to the millions affected by the prolonged destructive war and to lay the foundation for a better future for all citizens. The suffering of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank and their resentment towards Israel and its backers illustrate the consequences of an inactive peace process. The prolonged 'no-war-no-peace' situation in the Middle East also shows how problems multiply and intensify making it difficult to achieve permanent peace. ❑

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Torture by the book

Vikram Dodd

In Britain the debate about photographs depicting abuse of Iraqi prisoners has centred on their authenticity. In the US there are no doubts about the pictures showing what American soldiers did in Baghdad's Abu Ghraib prison. But the photos raise a larger question. Did a gang of reservists from Virginia hit on ways of mistreating Muslim prisoners to maximise their humiliation all by themselves? President Bush says the photos disgust him. However, there is growing evidence that the abuses in Abu Ghraib were no aberrant act, but a warped product of US policy and the practices of its intelligence community.

In emails released by his family, Staff Sergeant Ivan Frederick, a guard at Abu Ghraib, says military intelligence used dogs to intimidate prisoners, leading to "positive results and information". In one email he wrote: "We have had a very high rate with our style of getting them to break. They usually end up breaking within hours." Sgt Frederick said that he queried some of the abuses: "I questioned this and the answer I got was: this is how military intelligence wants it done." Another guard supports his claim that intelligence people controlled Abu Ghraib, as does the former head of US military prisons in Iraq, Brigadier General Janis Karpinski.

The recently leaked army report into the abuses, by Major General Antonio Taguba, said military intelligence, CIA personnel and private contractors "actively requested that guards set physical and mental conditions for favourable interrogation of witnesses". They were meant to soften up detainees before the interrogators got to work.

It's not just in Iraq that the US is accused of abusing its prisoners. The five Britons released from Guantánamo Bay told of beatings and other ill-treatment. Weeks before last year's alleged abuses at Abu Ghraib, Gen Karpinski said a team of intelligence officers from Guantánamo Bay visited Abu Ghraib to "give them new techniques".

While in Iraq in late August and early September 2003, the Guantánamo team - overseen by Major General Geoffrey Miller - recommended that military police guards act as "enablers" for interrogations, Gen Taguba reported. The US is now bringing in Gen Miller, who ran the camp at Guantánamo Bay, to run prisons in Iraq. He could at least ensure that guards no longer carry cameras.

A Briton released from Guantánamo alleged that, as in Abu Ghraib, sexual humiliation was identified by US officials as a way of breaking Muslim detainees. In Iraq it was the simulation of oral sex, forced masturbation and human pyramids, withpeople kept naked for long spells. In Guantánamo, according to one British detainee, naked prostitutes paraded before inmates to taunt them.

Abuse allegations against the US have now surfaced in Iraq, Guantánamo, Bagram, in Afghanistan, and even in Gambia, where a British businessman told the Guardian he was threatened with rape and beatings while being questioned by US agents.

Part of the interrogating team at Abu Ghraib was from the CIA. There are clues from that organisation's history that it has found ill-treating detainees to be useful in the past. Two CIA interrogation manuals surfaced in 1997 after the Baltimore Sun obtained them under freedom of information laws. Reading them in the context of the pictures from Iraq and accounts from Guantánamo suggests that the advice they contain is still being applied.

One, dating from 1983, was written for use in Honduras. Entitled "Human Resource Exploitation Training Manual", it states: "The purpose of all coercive techniques is to induce psychological regression in the subject by bringing a superior outside force to bear on his will to resist. Regression is basically a loss of autonomy."

Sgt Frederick says detainees at Abu Ghraib were kept in isolation for up to three days in windowless rooms. According to the CIA manual, "a person's sense of identity depends upon the continuity in his surroundings, habits, appearance, relations with others ... Detention should be planned to enhance ... feelings of being cut off from anything known and reassuring."

The US denies it uses torture. While the pulling of fingernails may be out, coercion and psychological stress are permitted, according to the CIA manual. How to put such advice into practice is up to intelligence officers.

Of the Iraqi images, the most chilling was the hooded man standing on a box, with wires attached to him. He was reportedly told he would be electrocuted if he moved. According to the CIA manual, threatening him with electrocution may have been better than the real thing: "The threat of coercion usually weakens or destroys resistance more effectively than coercion itself. For example, the threat to inflict pain can trigger fears more damaging than the immediate sensation of pain." However, "if a subject refuses to comply after a threat has been made, it must be carried out. Otherwise, subsequent threats will also prove ineffective."

But the CIA manual can enlighten us further about the scandal at Abu Ghraib. The man on the box would have battled exhaustion from having to stand motionless, driven by fear of an electric shock. And, the manual says, "pain that he feels he is inflicting upon himself is more likely to sap his resistance. If he is required to maintain a rigid position such as standing at attention or sitting on a stool for long periods, the immediate source of discomfort is not the questioner but the subject. After a while, the subject is likely to exhaust his internal motivational strength. Intense pain is likely to produce false confessions, fabricated to avoid additional punishment."

The 1983 CIA manual draws heavily from the 1963 "Kubark manual", named after the codeword the CIA

gave itself. It explains what the US military may have hoped to gain by sexually humiliating prisoners. "The effectiveness of most of the non-coercive techniques depends upon their unsettling effect. The interrogation situation is in itself disturbing to most people encountering it for the first time. The aim is to enhance this effect, to disrupt radically familiar emotional and psychological associations ... When this aim is achieved, resistance is seriously impaired. There is an interval ... of suspended animation, a kind of psychological shock or paralysis. It is caused by a traumatic or sub-traumatic experience which explodes, as it were, the world that is familiar to the subject as well as his image of himself within that world. At this moment the source is farlikelier to comply."

This appears to be what US intelligence officers at Abu Ghraib have been putting into effect. Specialist Sabrina Harman, one of the accused guards, testified that it was her job to keep prisoners awake, including the hooded man placed on a box with wires attached to his fingers, toes and genitals.

According to the New Yorker, she stated: "MI [military intelligence] wanted to get them to talk. It is Graner [a guard] and Frederick's job to do things for MI ... to get these people to talk" The Kubark manual states that "resistance is sapped principally by psychological rather than physical pressures". It also warns that approval from headquarters is needed for "bodily harm" or "medical, chemical or electrical methods". The two deaths now being treated as murder probably emanate from sadism, rather than policy.

It remains to be seen what kind of disciplinary or legal action the Abu Ghraib interrogators and their superiors will face. As Sgt Frederick wrote in an email: "They always said that shit rolls downhill, and guess who is at the bottom?" And if George Bush is unsure what US intelligence is capable of, he can always ask his dad. The first President Bush used to be head of the CIA.

Courtesy of The Guardian, 6 May 2004

Simplify the 'crooked' law

Ian Chappell

May 30 - You could never say Muttiah Muralitharan has had a love affair with Australia. On two separate occasions he has been no-balled for throwing while touring the country and both times by local umpires. Now the Prime Minister has labelled his action illegal.

Normally, technical comments about the game by a Prime Minister who should have more pressing problems on his mind are about as valid as a cricketer's theories on GNP.

Until Muralitharan cited the PM's irrelevant comment as a reason for not touring Australia it's likely that no one took any notice of John Howard's outburst.

The only good to come from Muralitharan's plight has been to highlight the quagmire created by the complicated law on illegal bowling actions.

As if it isn't confusing enough to have one type of bowler allowed to bend his arm more than another, how can the square-leg umpire be asked to adjudicate on degrees of 'crookedness' with the naked eye?

However, before the administrators work on simplifying the law regarding illegal deliveries, they must first decide what they are trying to achieve with the legislation.

If they want a batting exhibition then a law that allows for no bend in the bowler's arm is in order.

If they come to the (correct) conclusion that this is not in the best interests of the game then the answer is a simple law like; "If in the umpire's opinion the bowler is not gaining an unfair advantage from his action then the delivery is legal."

A simple law (without a definition) achieves a number of desired outcomes. It allows the umpires on the field to make a judgement, which is crucial because it's when a bowler pelts the odd delivery that it creates serious difficulties for the batsmen.

It also allows the bowler a bit of leniency in the bending of his arm, which is important if the bowlers are to remain competitive in their battle with batsmen.

And finally, it keeps the legal eagles out of the process which is imperative because no one wants cricket matches decided like a number of America's Cup races have been, in the court room.

These outcomes are predicated on the premise that; 1) A throw is easily discernible with the naked eye, 2) A throw has to be blatant to gain a real advantage and 3)

The umpires work out amongst themselves the basis for an action they believe doesn't give the bowler an unfair advantage. This is where the umpires could utilise video footage but the blanket use of this device to decide whether a bowler's action is legal or not is fraught with danger.

All bowlers, especially those who used a "cocked-wrist" style, look dubious when the action is in slow motion.

My reaction to Muralitharan's action hasn't changed. I concede he may be illegal according to the (stupid) law but I don't feel he gains any unfair advantage over and above that of any other finger spinner.

If you are critical of Muralitharan for an arm that goes "bent to straight," then you have to apply the same principle throughout and that means virtually every bowler is in some doubt.

If that's what the administrators want then fine but please don't ask me to watch the resulting debacle when Australia amass 1350 runs to draw with India who made 1246.

I also don't believe it's right to penalise Muralitharan (or any other player) because he's physically able to do things others aren't capable of achieving. Mark Waugh wasn't penalised because his wrist-work was far superior to the West Indies' Phil Simmons so why apply the principle to bowlers.

It's this bias in the laws towards batsmen that often lead bowlers to resort to ball tampering, chucking

(continued on next page)

NEWS TRACK

JVP for talks with LTTE: May 20 - Reflecting change in its previous hardline position, the JVP has fallen in line with the Government's recent moves to restart negotiations with the LTTE. Saying that the JVP also wanted a negotiated solution to the ethnic conflict, Wimal Weerawansa, the propaganda secretary of the JVP told jounalists in Colombo, the peace talks with the LTTE being considered by the Government did not violate the agreement reached by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna before the two parties joined to form the UPFA. However, that his party did not accept the LTTE's claim of being the sole representative of all the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Explosion kills LTTE cadre: May 21 - A member of the Liberation Tigers, Markandu Punithalingam (alias Rohithan or Kohilan), was killed in an explosion in Aalankerni, 42 kilometres north of Batticaloa, on May 21 night, aacording to LTTE sources in the eastern town said. Aalankerni is close to the Batticaloa-Polannaruwa Road in eastern Sri Lanka. LTTE sources said Commander Nagesh was the target of the claymore attack on the LTTE group that was travelling to Vakarai from Pendugalchchenai. The explosion was followed by light machine gun (LMG) fire from the assailants. This is the fourth incident in the last several weeks in Batticaloa district where LTTE cadres have been injured or killed.

According to LTTE sources, its Commander Nagesh was the target of the claymore mine attack on a group of cadres moving to Vakarai from Pendugalchchenai. While it is reported that the Karuna faction of the LTTE was responsible for these killings, E.Kausalyan, Batticaloa-Amparai Head of the LTTE political wing alleged that the killing was carried out with the support of the Sri Lanka Army (SLA), but the army has rejected the allegation.

No information about killers: May 21 - The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) said their inquiries into the killing of a police officer in Batticaloa had so far failed to confirm the identity of those responsible, SLMM spokeswoman Agnes Bragadottir told the press. She said the only information they have received was that the killers (two persons) had escaped on a motorcycle.

M.S. Dassanayake of the Anti-Subversive Unit of the Batticaloa Police was shot at by suspected LTTE cadres in Batticaloa on 19 May while he was purchasing stamps at a post office. M.S. Dassanayake was the second intelligent operative killed within this month in Batticaloa following the killing of Lance Corporal Wasantha Colombage attached to the Sri Lanka Army Intelligence Unit on May 9 while he was travelling from Chenkaladi to Batticaloa.

The LTTE Political Head in Batticaloa, E. Kausalyan, according to a TamilNet report, had said the LTTE had nothing to do with the killing of the Police officer.

EPDP office attacked: May 22 - The Bambalapitiya police are investigating a bomb and gun attack on the EPDP office situated in Layard's Road Colombo during the night on Friday 21 May.. OIC Bambalapitiya police Ananda Kumarasiri said the bomb that had been flung from a vehicle had caused damage estimated at Rs 250,000 to the building. Nobody had been injured in the attack.

Division among Sinhala leadership: May 23 – Expressing pessimism about the prospects for the peace process, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) said that it would be difficult to find a lasting political solution to the ethnic conflict through negotiations as the Sinhala political leadership is sharply divided on the question of resuming peace talks on the basis of Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA) put forward by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Addressing the public meeting held in Trincomalee Town Hall on 23 May, Mr.R.Sampanthan, leader of the TNA parliamentary, "It would be foolish to think that a final political solution could be found to the Tamil national question without establishing the ISGA in the northeast province. The ISGA will serve as a bridge towards finding a final political resolution to the conflict."

The international community should openly tell the Sri Lankan government that Tamils should be allowed to go their own way if the Sinhala political leadership fails to find a lasting political solution that could meet the legitimate aspirations of Tamils, Mr.Sampanthan reiterated.

Obviously in a reference to the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the position of Indian government on Sri Lankan Tamils' issue, Mr.Sampanthan said, "A member of the Sikh community has been made Prime Minister of India with the full blessing of Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, daughter in law of late Mrs. Indira Gandhi who was assassinated by a member of her Sikh bodyguards several years ago. This proves that some incidents become history."

Arrested for possession of firearms: May 24 - Mr. Theivanayagam Sutharsan of Mamangam in Batticaloa in eastern Sri Lanka was arrested by Sri Lanka police and produced before the Magistrate, Mr. A.H.M. Ajmeer, on 24 May, for illegal possession of firearms. The Magistrate remanded the youth till June 7, sources in Batticaloa said. The police said that on receipt of information, the youth was arrested and investigated, and during the investigations it came to light that he had a T-56 rifle and ammunition hidden at home.

Solheim in Colombo: May 25 - Norwegian special peace envoy Mr. Erik Solheim arrived in Colombo May 24 night on a five-day visit. He is scheduled to meet Sri Lanka's President Ms Chandrika Kumaratunge and Prime Minister Mr.Mahinda Rajapakse before leaving to Kilinochchi to meet the leadership of the LTTE.

Mr.Solheim expects to prepare the groundwork for resuming the stalled peace talks between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE.

Mr.Solheim was in Sri Lanka two weeks' ago and held discus-

(continued from page 26)

and bodyline to try and redress the balance. Originally it was in the interests of an even contest that bowling advanced from under-arm to round arm and finally to over arm.

It should be remembered this process wasn't aided by the administrators who tried to thwart the bowlers at every turn.

In the end it was only the single-minded determination of some resolute bowlers that brought about the improvements and ensured the modern game is a reasonably even contest.

If the administrators are really serious about cleaning up bowling actions then the problem needs to be sorted out at the lower levels of the game so bowlers with dubious deliveries never even reach first-class level.

In the meantime what the game desperately needs is a simple law on bowling actions and Muralitharan playing in Australia rather than being yet another person John Howard doesn't want in the country.

sions with the leaders of the United Peoples Freedom Alliance (UPFA), LTTE, main opposition United National Party, Tamil National Alliance and Sri Lanka Muslim Congress on the resumption of peace talks at the invitation of Ms.Kumaratunge.

Alleged Tiger spy arrested: May 25 - The arrest of an LTTE suspect by the Settikulama Police on 24 May has uncovered an alleged plot to attack the oil storage facilities at Sapugaskanda. Vavuniya SSP T.J. Miskin said the information was revealed when the suspect was interrogated. The alleged LTTE spy under an assumed name was arrested while he was on his way to Colombo to gather intelligence for the alleged attack. Police said they recovered Rs. 300,000 and a forged identity card in the name of 'Palitha Ratnayake'. He has told Police that he was asked by the leadership to rent a house close to Sapugaskanda in order to spy. He is still being interrogated. The suspect, a strong supporter of the LTTE in the plantation areas, was arrested along with a child while travelling to Vavuniya on a bicycle.

The LTTE however has denied newspaper reports which claimed that its members were sent to Colombo in order to spy with a view to attacking the Sapugaskanda oil refinery. The LTTE's Media spokesman Daya Master said these newspapers had published a distorted news item to create a wrong impression of the LTTE among the Sinhala community, Rupavahini said.

HSZ issue before Supreme Court: May 25 - The Supreme Court (SC) directed the Secretary of the Ministry of Defense (MoD) to submit a report on the question of maintaining high security zones (HSZs) in the Jaffna district. A three-member bench of the Court on 24 May made the order on Fundamental Rights violation applications filed by five Tamil farmers and Mr. Mavai Senathirajah, Tamil National Alliance parliamentarian, in the Jaffna district.

The Rights applications filed by Mr. Senathirajah and others were taken up for inquiry in the Supreme Court before Chief Justice Mr.Sarath N.Silva, Justices Asoka de Silva and Nihal Jayasinghe Monday.

The petitioners cited several officials as respondents including the Secretary of Ministry of Defense and the Commander of Sri Lanka Army (SLA), legal sources said. According to the petitioners they have been permanent residents of the area which are now occupied by the SLA and marked as high security zones. They have been prevented by the security forces to occupy their lands and houses even after the ceasefire agreement came into operation about two years ago. This is a violation of the petitioners fundamental rights, legal sources said

The Supreme Court fixed the inquiry for June 26th directing the Secretary of the Ministry of Defense to furnish a report on the HSZ in Jaffna district on the next date.

LTTE calls for SLMM inquiry: May 25 - Mr. E. Kausalyan, the political head of the Liberation Tigers in Batticaloa condemned the murder of the Eastern University academic, Mr. Kumaravel Thambaiah, and demanded a full and independent inquiry by the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission.

The LTTE's political division has released a public statement condemning the killing and has sent its deepest condolences to the family of Mr. Thambaiah, saying the death of the academic, who worked for the educational, economic and social development of the Tamil society, was an irreparable loss to the Tamil nation.

"The head of the Department of Economics at the Eastern University has been murdered by enemies of the Tamil nation. These anti-national elements, determined to destroy the educational, social and economic development of the Tamil nation, and to weaken the liberation struggle, have murdered Mr.Thambaiah," said the LTTE statement.

The statement added: "We have asked the SLMM to begin a full inquiry into the killing. Mr. Thambaiah who was fully dedicated to the development of the Batticaloa district was a courageous and concerned advocate for Tamil nationalism. He had a permanent place in the hearts of the Tamil people of Batticaloa. The anti-national forces that could not tolerate this have killed him."

JHU officially takes over SU: May 26 - The Sihala Urumaya was officially taken over by the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) on 25 May with a new constitution and new officials representing both clergy and lay people.

Speaking at the convention held in Maharagama, SU leader Thilak Karunarathna said the hand over of the party to the Maha Sangha would disprove accusations of SU members trying to make it to parliament with the help of Buddhist monks.

Mr. Karunarathna does not hold any office under the new structure, although other leading figures of the SU, Chamapaka Ranawaka, will be secretary in charge of lay people, Udaya Gammanpila administrative secretary and Tissa Abeywickrema treasurer.

JHU General Secretary Ven. Uduwe Dhammaloka Thera said the party would build a group of young people to take over the leadership after achieving the goals of the Dhammarajjya. He said that although the leader and members of the SU had handed over the party to the Bikkhus in a time of need, the party constitution of the SU could not serve the needs of the JHU. He said the JHU would launch district groups through some 1000 temples to strengthen the party in rural areas.

Protest against Deputy Minister's visit: May 26 - Sri Lanka's Deputy Media Minister, Mr. M.S.Cegu Issadeen, Tuesday cancelled his meeting with Jaffna based journalists and a planned discussion with Sri Lanka government officials at the Jaffna district secretariat on 25 May because of a protest by members of Jaffna district civil groups and Jaffna University students, sources said. Reports in the Colombo media alleged that the LTTE was responsible for orchestrating the protest.

Protestors carrying placards and black flags shouted slogans that people of Jaffna have been languishing in refugee camps and welfare centres unable to resettle in the houses and do cultivation in their agricultural lands which are occupied by the Sri Lanka Army in the name of high security zones. A spokesman for the protesters had reportedly said, "Hence we would not allow government ministers coming here, meeting peoples' representatives and to hold conferences to show the world that every thing in Jaffna is normal," according to a report in TamilNet.

Muslim families return home: May 26 - The Sri Lanka Army has allowed five internally displaced Muslim families to resettle in their houses located in the high security zones in Thenmaradchchi in Jaffna district. SLA officials of the 53rd Brigade handed over the keys of the five houses to the legal Muslim owners in the presence of Thenmaradchchi Division Secretariat officials, according to local sources.

Muslim families in the Jaffna district were forcibly displaced by the Tamil Tigers in 1990. About five Muslim families returned to Chavakachcheri recently to resettle in their houses. But up to now they had been prevented by the SLA to return to their homes. Hence they sought refuge in Jumma Mosque, which is located along Chavakachcheri-Thanankilappu road.

LTTE calls for 'Institutionaliation of ISGA: May 26 - The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have categorically told the United Peoples Freedom Alliance (UPFA) government through Norwegian facilitators that the institutionalization of the Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA) in the northeast province should take place first and that the core issues can be discussed later.

The LTTE Peace Secretariat in a news release issued on 26 May said that the Norwegian team comprising Mr. Erik Solheim, the Special envoy to Sri Lanka and Mr. Hans Brattskar, the Norwegian Ambassador to Sri Lanka have conveyed to the LTTE the thinking of Sri Lanka's President Ms. Chandrika Kumarathunge that "the discussions on ISGA proposals should take place parallel to the discussions on core issues."

In responding to the President's thinking, Mr. Thamilchelvan said that "institutionalizing the ISGA should take place first so that we can demonstrate to the people that their urgent humanitarian needs would be effectively met with by the ISGA and will help to build confidence among the people who are the real stakeholders in the peace process."

Mr.Thamilchelvan further said, "the Tamils' thinking is loud and clear in that the overwhelming mandate on the implementation of the ISGA proposals is a verdict that cannot be ignored," quoted the news release.

Peace process discussed in Berlin: May 27 - Representatives of the Sri Lankan Government, the Liberation Tigers and the International Donor Community participated in a conference titled, "New perspectives in the Sri Lankan Peace Process - the current political situation and the role of the International community," organised by the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies and Transformation in Berlin Wednesday, sources said.

Discussions centered on issues preventing early resumption of peace talks between the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and the Liberation Tigers (LTTE)

The Roundtable was chaired by Dr. Norbert Ropers, Director, Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies Sri Lanka Office. Mr. S. Pulithevan, Secretary General of the LTTE's peace secretariat and Dr. Jeyampathy Vickramaratne, Senior Advisor to Sri Lanka's Ministry of Constitutional Affairs participated in the roundtable.

Suicide cadre with satellite connections: May 28 - Terrorist Investigation Division (TID) informed the Colombo Chief Magistrate on 27 May that the cellular phone recovered at Polatupitiya junction, Kurunegala from the LTTE cadre who blasted himself on April 26 had connections with eight satellite technology phones.

TID made an application to Chief Magistrate Mrs. Kusala Sarojini Weerawardene to issue an order to Dialog GSM Company to identify the owners of those satellite technology phones. TID said they were conducting investigations about the persons who came to Colombo along with the suicide cadre. Investigations are on to identify the incoming and the out going phone calls from March 20 to April 30. Earlier TID informed they had identified the LTTE cadre as Kanagasabai Thurairajah Singham from Navatkudah, Batticaloa.

The Chief Magistrate issued an order to the manager of Dialog GSM Company to give a detailed report to the TID. She also ordered the TID to conduct further investigations and submit a report on September 2.

Solheim meets President: May 28 - President Ms Chandrika Kumaratunge Thursday held a two-hour long discussion on 27 May with the visiting Norwegian special peace envoy Mr. Erik Solheim on the prospects of resuming peace talks between the Government and the LTTE. Norwegian ambassador in Colombo Mr. Hans Brattskar attended the meeting along with Mr.Solheim. Foreign Minister Mr.Lakshman Kadirgamar, Peace Secretariat Secretary General Mr.Jayantha Dhanapala and Foreign Secretary Mr.S.Pallikhara accompanied Ms. Kumaratunge in the talks.

The talks centred on the outcome of the talks Mr.Solehim had with LTTE leadership in Kilinochchi on the previous day. Mr.Solheim brought to the notice of the President that the LTTE has been committed to the ceasefire agreement and was for the resumption of peace talks from where it was left, sources said.

Ms. Kumaratunge is reported to have informed Norwegian facilitators that her government is prepared to resume talks with the LTTE but expressed her stand on the procedure.

Norwegian facilitators are expected to return to Kilinochchi later to convey the outcome of the talks they had with Ms.Kumaratunge and to convey the stand of the Sri Lanka government in preparing the agenda for future talks.

LTTE/SLA discussions: May 28 - Jaffna district political head of LTTE, Mr.C.Ilamparithi, and Jaffna district General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Sri Lanka Army, Major General Susil Chandrapala, held a two-hour long discussion at the office of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) in Jaffna on problems affecting the normal life of the people of the Jaffna district. The chief monitor of the SLMM in the district, Ms.Anita Sternberg, chaired the meeting. The SLA delegation included Major General Kulatunga. On behalf of the LTTE, the head of the sports division, Mr.K.Paapa, and media co-ordinator, Mr.K. Imayavan, also participated.

The discussion centred on the increase of criminal activities, road accidents and the attempts by Sri Lanka's security forces to prevent internally displaced families from resettling in the their houses and lands 600 meters from the forward defense lines of the high security zones.

The participants explored the possibility of formulating a scheme to bring the criminal activities and road accidents to control in the peninsula. At the end of the discussions SLMM monitors stressed that SLA and LTTE should join hands and work for the restoration of normalcy in the Jaffna district.

LTTE aircraft claim: May 28 - Air Force chief, Air Marshal Donald Perera said though the armed forces had information that the LTTE had built an airstrip somewhere in the area under its control, the claim made by LTTE political wing leader Thamilselvan that the organisation had an aircraft of its own, may have been a psychological move to awe the government. He said there was no evidence to show that the LTTE had any aircraft in the territory under their control in the Wanni. The LTTE was known to make statements without any truth behind them. Even if they had an aircraft they could not fly it over the territory outside their control as the MoU signed between the Government and the LTTE precludes such a move, since it would amount

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to a breach of the ceasefire agreement, Donald Perera said. Thamilselvan was reported to have said on Tuesday 27 May that the LTTE has an airstrip and aircraft in the territory under their control.

Solheim meets PM and, Hakeem: May 28 - Norwegian special peace envoy, Mr.Erik Solheim, met with the Prime Minister, Mr.Mahinda Rajapakse, and the leader of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), Mr.Rauff Hakeem, and discussed the latest developments that have arisen in finding a consensus in resuming the stalled peace talks between the Government and the LTTE. Mr.Rauff Hakeem reiterated the position of the SLMC that in future peace talks Muslims should be accommodated as a separate entity and it should be the responsibility of the international community to ensure the aspirations of Muslims in this regard.

Rauff Hakeem told a Norwegian Envoy the accommodation of a Muslim delegation was a must as they were also victims of the 20 year-old ethnic conflict. Hakeem also claimed that if the Muslims are not represented in the peace talks, no solution to the ethnic issue could be 100% acceptable. He also added that it was not necessary for the SLMC itself to lead the Muslim delegation, but as long as a Muslim delegation is allowed, that was what matters.

The Special Envoy however told Hakeem that he was unable to give an assurance on the matter, but promised to speak to both the Government and the LTTE about accommodating the separate Muslim delegation.

$220m ADB aid for Lanka: May 29 - The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has pledged US $ 220 million assistance for Sri Lanka's development this year. ADB Vice President Liqun Jin said they were pleased in the manner in which the government was committed to peace and reaching for a negotiated settlement. He said the economic balance in Sri Lanka was improving and this was one reason for the ADB to pledge assistance to Sri Lanka. Jin said the ADB will continue providing assistance for post conflict rehabilitation.

"Regional balance and development can support the peace process. Permanent peace will be a key factor in economic stability and poverty reduction," he said.

The ADB assistance for this year would include US $ 40 million for education, US $ 15 million for road development and US $ 15 million for the North-East development.

A further US $ 65 million had been allocated towards the development of the private sector. He said the economy should be dominated by the State and private sector should play a leading role. Assisting the North-East, providing water to Hambantota, building express ways, education and energy sector development are some of the key areas that the ADB would focus this year.

Jin also met the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and other ministers. He assured the Prime Minister of ADB's firm commitment to support the peace process and providing assistance for post conflict rehabilitation. ADB sees lasting peace as a key factor in the country's development process. He congratulated the Government and the LTTE for maintaining the ceasefire, sometimes under very trying conditions.

"We hope that the commitment to peace never wanes and war is now a thing in the past. I would like to offer my best wishes to all parties involved in peace making and hope their efforts will bear fruit in the future," he said.

The vice-president visited ADB funded projects in the North and the South. In Jaffna, he laid the foundation stone for a school, opened a new school and a ward for the conflict-damaged Chavakachcheri hospital. In the South, he visited the Southern Expressway. In cooperation with the Government and development partners, the ADB is working on updating its country strategy for Sri Lanka that will guide its operations here over the next three to four years.

Tamil youth shot dead: May 30 - Mr.Arulananthan Arulparath, a 32-year-old Tamil youth was shot deadon 28 May in Kurumankadu area in Vavuniya town in northern Sri Lanka. Two gunmen who came in a motorbike alleged to have fired at Arulparath. The deceased was a native of Orr's Hill area in Trincomalee in eastern Sri Lanka. The victim was engaged in business activities in Vavuniya for some time, police said.

According to police sources, nine youths had been shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Vavuniya in recent times, Police said.

PC polls on July 10: May 30 - Elections for six provincial councils will be held on July 10 and all campaigns should wind-up before midnight July 7, Elections Commissioner Dayananda Dissanayake said.. Nominations for four provinces, Western, Sabaragamuwa, North Central and the Southern were closed on 28 May and nominations for the Uva and Central provinces had been closed earlier.

Fourteen political parties and four independent groups had submitted their nominations for the Western Province while eight political parties and three independent groups submitted nominations for the North Central, Sabaragamuwa and the Southern provinces contested by 16 and 11 political parties, five and three independent groups respectively.

Assistant Elections Commissioner K. Senanayake said that 102 representatives will be elected for the Western Province while the Southern Province will have 53 councillors. Forty-two representatives will be elected for Sabaragamuwa province and 31 for the North Central province.

Sources from the Elections Commissioner's office said that no posters, banners or placards will be allowed in public places. They also said that Rs. 9 million has been set aside to remove unauthorised publicity materials in public places and more than 1,000 persons will be deployed by the police under the directive of the Elections Commissioner for the purpose.

SLMC sacks three parliamentarians: May 31 - The Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) High Command on 30 May expelled four of its leading members including three dissident parliamentarians. Messrs Risard Badiudin, Najeeb Abdul Majeed and Hussain Baila from the ordinary membership of the party with immediate effect for working against party policies and its leadership, SLMC in a press release said.

SLMC leader Mr.Rauff Hakim did not attend high command meeting, which unanimously decided to sack the four dissidents including three MPs, press release said.

The fourth member expelled is Mr.M.Inamullah who is a member of the party high command. Mr. Hussain Baila is one of the national list parliamentarians of the SLMC. Mr. Risard Badiudin was elected in the April 2nd poll from the Vanni electoral district and Mr. Najeeb Abdul Majeed from the electoral district.

The SLMC party high command had reportedly considered the letter sent by dissident parliamentarians seeking two weeks' time to send in their explanation to the charges made against them and as to why they should not be expelled from the party. The dissidents did not attend the meeting of the high command though they had been invited to do so.

SLMC sources said that the party high command would take further action to unseat Mr. Risard Badiudin, Mr. Najeeb Abdul Majeed and Mr. Hussain Baila from Sri Lanka parliament.

Batticaloa journalist shot dead: May 31 - Mr. Aiyathura

Nadesan, a leading Tamil journalist in Sri Lanka, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen Monday morning around eight a.m. when he was going to work in a motorbike. The assailants came in a motorbike in front and fired at him, Batticaloa Police said.

The body of Mr. Nadesan was handed over to the Batticaloa Teaching Hospital and the autopsy was held. Many have blamed the Karuna faction of the LTTE for the killing.

Mr.Nadesan has been reporting to Tamil daily, Virakesari, IBC Tamil service and to some electronic media. Mr.Nadesan was born in Nelliady, a town 25km northeast of Jaffna town, and won the NorthEast Sahithya Academy award for his book "History of Ethnic Strife," written in Tamil. He also won the best Tamil journalist award in 2000.

WB's Harrold meets Thamilchelvan: June 1 - Director of World Bank Country Representative for Sri Lanka, Mr. Peter Harrold, met with LTTE's Head of Political Wing, S.P.Thamilchelvan at the LTTE's Kilinochchi Peace Secretariat, its website said on 1 June. The discussions reportedly centred on the need for funds to support urgent humanitarian needs in the NorthEast.

Mr. Thamilchelvan is said to have stressed the importance of institutionalising the ISGA, fulfilling the Tamil mandate in the general elections of April 2004.

"In the absence of an effective Interim Administration as democratically mandated by the Tamil people," Mr. Tamilselvan said, "any other mechanism cannot cope effectively to address the urgent humanitarian needs of a nation of people affected by two decades of war."

Mr. Peter Harrold reportedly assured that the international community will remain committed to the Tokyo declaration which specifically reiterates the necessity to link aid to progress in the peace process, according to the report.

Warning by 'Eastern Tigers': June 1 - The break away Karuna faction of the LTTE has issued a warning to the Eastern Province Tamils that resumption of hostilities is imminent. Issuing leaflets to this effect, activists of the 'Eastern Tigers' led by the renegade LTTE Commander Karuna has urged the Tamil youth to desist from siding with the Prabhakaran-led LTTE.

According to local reports, Karuna's men were travelling in the east on motorcycles distributing leaflets despite the presence of Prabhakaran's cadres.

In the leaflets the Karuna faction says that the talks to be revived will be scuttled by the Wanni leadership. "We urge the Eastern Province Tamil youth not to sacrifice their lives in vain by heeding the call from the Wanni for enlisting," one leaflet says while requesting the parents of Tamil children not to allow their dear ones to get deceived by the Wanni leadership into enlisting. "It is your duty to save your children", says the pamphlet. This propaganda offensive, according to intelligence sources, could be the beginning of another round of skirmishes between the two groups.

Committee to address UPFA disputes: June 2 - The leaders of Sri Lanka Freedom party (SLFP) and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), agreed at a discussion held on 1 June to appoint a committee of representatives of the two parties to iron out the differences that have arisen in implementing the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the two parties.

The meeting held at the President's House was attended by President Ms Chandrika Kumaratunge presiding, SLFP general secretary and minister, Mr.Maithiripala Sirisena, and Ministers Nimal Sripala de Silva and Mangala Samaraweera representing the SLFP, and Tilvin Silva, Wimal Weerawanse and Nandana Gunatilake representing the JVP.

During the four-hour discussion, Peace Secretariat Secretary General, Mr.Jayantha Dhanapala, briefed the JVP delegation about the proposed peace talks and the matters that are to be discussed with theLTTE. Mr.Kusum Balapattebandi, one time Secretary to the President, also participated in the discussion.

Ms. Kumaratunge had invited the JVP leaders for a discussion following a four-page letter sent by the JVP to her a few days earlier, which alleged that the SLFP repeatedly violated the two parties'

SLA, LTTE agree on joint security measures: June 3 - A meeting organized by the Sri lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) between the Sri Lankan military and the LTTE was held on 2 June relating mainly dealing with security matters.

The full text of the press release issued by the SLMM follows:

"At a meeting held today between GOSL and LTTE representatives LTTE agreed to immediately establish a direct liaison with Sri Lanka Police. The LTTE further agreed to provide information to assist with the identification and apprehension of criminal elements in Batticaloa area.

"The meeting took place in the Divisional Secretariat of Vavunathivu today, Wednesday 2nd June at 1100 hrs. Acting Head of Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, Mr. Hagrup Haukland, chaired the meeting.

"The delegation from GOSL consisted of Major General S.H.S. Kottegoda, Eastern Overall Operational Command, GOC Brigadier Vajira Wijeyagoonewardena, Sri Lanka Army 23 Division, Colonel Laksiri Amaratunga, 233 Brigade, Batticaloa, Mr. Samaradiwakara, SSP Batticaloa District, Mr. Hettiarachchi, Inspector of Police, and Mr. Upul Seneviratne SP STF, and representatives.

"The delegation from LTTE consisted of Col. Ramesh, Special Commander, Batticaloa and Ampara, Mr. Kowsalyan, Head of Political Wing, Batticaloa and Ampara District, Mr. Bavanantham, Deputy Director, LTTE Peace Secretariat, Kilinochchi, Mr. V. Jeyarthan, Mr. Ramanan, and Mr. F. Manoj.

"SLMM delegation consisted of Acting Head of SLMM, Mr. Hagrup Haukland, Mr. Preben Rasmussen, Acting Head of SLMM District Office Batticaloa, and representatives.

"The Parties agreed to arrange regular coordination meetings between local LTTE and Security Forces commanders. These meetings will focus on developing joint actions through practical arrangements and mechanisms to identify, isolate and detain those responsible for the recent killings in the Batticaloa area. The first meeting will take place on 15th June 04.

"Major General Kottegoda and Col. Ramesh agreed to continue having direct meetings. Both representatives stated that they wanted an end to the killings in the Batticaloa area, and stressed the importance of coordination and practical arrangements between local commanders.

"The Parties agreed to continue to uphold and respect the Cease Fire Agreement entered into between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam on the 22nd of February 2002."

It is learnt that at this meeting, the LTTE wanted the SLA's consent to deploy armed cadres in government-held areas in Ampara and Batticaloa region to hunt Karuna loyalists. The group's Kilinochchi leadership believes the Oslo-arranged Cease-Fire Agreement (CFA) should not restrict their ongoing operations against renegade cadres operating in areas under security forces control.

The security forces delegation turned down their request on the basis the CFA expressly prohibited the entry of armed LTTE cadres to areas under security forces control. The army also ruled out the possibility of carrying out indiscriminate arrests in the

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region. "We'll make arrests only if they are found with weapons," the sources said, revealing that security forces agreed act on information provided by the LTTE. The military had said their action would depend on the authenticity of the information.

Tamil youth killed: June 4 - Mr.John Chandramohan alias Victor aged 26 and a father of two children was found dead on 4 June with cut injuries on his neck and his both hands were tied behind his back in a restroom which is located along Udupiddy-Vathiri road in Vadamarachchi division in Jaffna district, Nelliayadi Police said.

Mr. Chandramohan, a native of Trincomalee married in Navindil, Karaveddy in Vadamarachchi division was reported missing for the last two days. His body was found on the third day..

The Nelliyady Police rushed to the scene on receipt of information and removed the body to Manthikai base hospital. The Point Pedro Magistrate Mr.K. Ariyanayakam held the inquest into the death at the base hospital. The Magistrate at the conclusion of the inquest directed the Police to conduct further investigation to this alleged murder.

CWC demands to support govt.: Desperate to shore up its number of seats to give a secure majority in parliament, the governing UPFA coalition has been trying hard to obtain the support of the Ceylon Workers Congress. But because of the "excessive demands" made by the CWC in return for its support, the talks between these two parties appear to have collapsed.

According to reports in the Colombo media, the demands made by CWC included two key ministries, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Housing Ministry with the subjects of Urban Development Authority, Upcountry Plantation and Infrastructure to be allocated to the CWC nominees. .

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The reports also indicate that the CWC leader Mr.Thondaman had also put forward three other demands, namely, that the Executive Presidency should not be abolished, the present voting system of Proportionate Representation must be retained and the controversial Kotmale hydropower project known as the 'Kotmale Project' should be abandoned.

Soldier kills superior, commits suicide: June 5 - Mr. Ratnayake Mudiansalagae Seneviratne, a twenty-year-old soldier of the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) shot dead his 37-year-old superior Sergeant Mr. Gunaratne Vasantha Liyanage and then committed suicide by shooting himself on 4 June. He left a letter stating that he had killed his superior, as he was unable to tolerate his punishment, police said.

Both were serving in a SLA camp located in Kerativu in Chavakachcheri area in Thenmaradchchi division. Soldier Seneviratene is a native of Medigiriya and Sergeant Liyanage is from Medawahchiya, police said.

Initial police investigation revealed that the suspect soldier had entered the room where the deceased sergeant was staying and shot him at point blank. The sergeant died on the spot. Thereafter the suspect shot himself.

The letter left behind by Seneviratne said that another soldier owed him about Rs 8,000/= and requested his superior to recover the money from the soldier and to spend on charity, police said.

LTTE sets 'guidelines' for TNA MPs: June 6 - Tamil National Alliance parliamentarians met with Leader of LTTE's Political Wing, S.P.Thamilchelvan on 4 June in the LTTE political head quarters in Kilinochchi for a four hour long meeting. The issues and the urgent need for institutionlizing self governance for NorthEast based on LTTE's Interim Self-Governing Authority proposals were discussed in the meeting, , LTTE peace secretariat website said.

Twenty-one TNA parliamentarians participated in the discussion, which commenced around 11 a.m. Vanni district parliamentarian Mr.Selvam Adaikalanathan did not attend the discussion as he was out of the country, TNA sources said. District Political Heads of the LTTE also participated in the discussion.

"The legislators have been briefed on the LTTE view of the government's delay in responding to the facilitator's message on the necessity to take up the ISGA issue as the basis of recommencing the negotiations. The parliamentarians have been provided with guidelines to work within and outside the parliament giving due considerations to the mandate of the Tamil people," said Thamilchelvan according to the report.

Auto-rickshaw driver shot dead: June 6 - An auto rickshaw driver, identified as Sathees Thamotharampillai, 21, of Railway Station Road, Vairavapuliyankulam, was shot dead by unidentified men in the northern town of Vavuniya, on 5 June.

The alleged killers had hired the vehicle for a trip to Koomankulam, according to the victim's mother who had seen the men. She added that when her son did not return home during the night they started looking for his son. The driver's body was found the following morning, The police said the driver had been assaulted before he was shot and killed. Gun shot marks were also found on the auto which was found abandoned nearby.

Mahanayake Thera passes away: June 7 - The Mahanayake Thera of Malwatte Chapter Most Venerable Rambukwelle Vipassi passed away in the afternoon of 7 June in the Kandy general hospital after a brief illness at the age of 89.

He was born in the year 1916 and entered priesthood in 1930. He was appointed Mahanayake of Malwatte chapter in the year

1989. Sri Lanka Buddha Sasana Ministry is making arrangement to conduct a State funeral for the departed Buddhist leader.

JVP to brief foreign envoys on ISGA: June 7 - The Jathika Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), constituent of the ruling coalition, the United Peoples Freedom Alliance (UPFA), said that it would brief Colombo based foreign envoys the reasons for opposing the Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA) proposal submitted by the LTTE for the northeast province.

According to the JVP General Secretary Mr.Tilvin Silva, his party leadership has decided to meet foreign envoys within the next few days and would brief them about the clauses in the ISGA they feel would undermine the sovereignty, unitary status and territorial integrity of the country.

The JVP already issued a statement in apparent reaction to an appeal by the co-chairs of the Sri Lanka Aid conference held on June at Brussels in Belgium that the 4.5 billion Dollar aid package pledged to Sri Lanka in Tokyo conference might go elsewhere if the Government and the LTTE did not resume peace talks immediately.

The JVP leadership would inform all foreign envoys that UPFA has no problem in engaging in talks with the LTTE to solve the ethnic conflict if the sovereignty or the security of the country is not sacrificed. But the ISGA of the LTTE is designed to undermine the sovereignty of the country. Hence the international community should come forward to pressure the LTTE to drop the demand for ISGA, the JVP leadership said.

Opposition petition to Speaker: June 10 - Members of opposition political parties in the Sri Lanka's parliament numbering about 114 have submitted a petition to the Speaker to take steps to safeguard democracy in the parliament. Leaders of the common opposition took this step as a reaction to the incidents that occurred in parliament on 8 June and to show that they are in a majority. The opposition alleges that MPs belonging to the governing coalition orchestrated the incidents.

Leaders of the United National Party (UNP), Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC), Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), Tamil National Alliance (TNA), Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) and Upcountry peoples Front (UPF) met on June 10 morning in the parliamentary complex and decided to submit a petition to the Speaker.

Tax on foreigners buying land: June 10 - The Sri Lankan cabinet at its meeting on 9 June decided to reintroduce the 100 percent duty on purchase of land in Sri Lanka by foreigners The government proposes to enact legislation soon to minimise avenues for foreigners to purchase land in Sri Lanka by the imposition of a tax equivalent to the market value of the land in question. The tax may be imposed with retrospective effect to cover property that has already been purchased.

Minister Piyasena Gamage told the press that the decision was taken in the wake of foreigners buying local land at an alarmingly high rate He said the purchase of land especially in the southern coastal belt at cheap prices by foreigners could gradually be a threat to the country's sovereignty.

"This is becoming dangerous. If we are not able to put a halt to this quickly, foreigners might make our country their paradise", he said. He said the Government would ensure that foreign investors who buy land here for investment purposes are not affected when the new legislation is introduced. He said the proposed legislation was discussed at the very first Cabinet meeting.

He stated that about 30 to 40 percent of the land in the southern coastal belt is now owned by foreign nationals who initially buy them for residential purposes and later construct hotels. He said foreigners have bought 68 out of about 350 houses in the Fort area in Galle. He blamed the former UNF Government for relaxing the laws and removing the tax thus enabling foreigners to buy local property without difficulty.

Restraining order on JHU MP: June 11 - The Colombo District Court has ordered the newly sworn in Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) parliamentarian Venerable Akmeemana Dayaratna Thera to appear in court on July 25 and issued a stay order on him prohibiting him from performing the functions of an elected representative till the legal suit filed against him is finalized.

The JHU leadership nominated Venerable Akmeemana Dayaratna Thera to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Venerable Kataluwe Ratnaseeha Thera.

However, Venerable Kataluwe Ratnaseeha Thera later filed a petition in the District Court stating that he was forced resign from being MP under duress by some elements of the JHU. The petitioner in his suit sought relief from court that his resignation should be invalidated and Venerable Dayaratna Thera should be unseated.

SLA personnel missing: June 11 - Second Lieutenant W.A.S.Wikremaretna and soldier private Mr.Joseph Thomas Peter Karunaratne of the Sri Lanka Army are reported to be missing since June 8 from the 551 Brigade of the SLA which is located in Nagarkovil in Vadamarachchi division in Jaffna district, according to security sources.

Both security personnel left Nagarkovil camp on June 8 to adjoining army detachment located in adjoining Manalkadu in Vadamarachchi division. When they were returning to Nagarkovil they were reported to have disappeared without any clues. SLA sources said both men could have strayed into the Liberation Tigers controlled areas in the Vadamarachchi division and the Tigers might have taken them into custody and detained them. The SLA is reported to have complained to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) about the disappearance of these two persons.

JHU presents unethical conversions Bill: June 13 - The Jathika Hela Urumaya Parliamentarian the Ven. Omalpe Sobitha Thera in a private members Bill to parliament has proposed stringent action against those involved in unethical conversions.

The Bill titled "Prohibition of Forcible Conversion of Religion" proposes the imposition of an imprisonment of not exceeding five years and a fine not exceeding Rs. 150,000 for a person found guilty of using force, allurement or fraudulent means to convert a person to another religion.

The Bill further provides that a person found guilty of converting a minor, a woman, Samurdhi beneficiaries, prison inmates, inmates of rehabilitation centres and detention centres and physically and mentally disabled, employees of an organisation, members of the armed forces or police, students, inmates of hospitals and or places of healing and refugee camps and any other category as may be prescribed by the Minister of the subject by regulations will have to serve an imprisonment not exceeding seven years and also be liable to a fine not exceeding Rs. 500,000.

According to the proposed Bill, a person who changes his or her religion and the one who converts or acts as a facilitator by performing any ceremony or by taking part in such ceremony directly or indirectly will have to inform the Divisional Secretary of the respective area within a period prescribed by the Minister. Whoever fails to comply, without sufficient cause, will be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years or with a fine not exceeding Rs. 150,000 on conviction.

LTTE resumes child recruitment –Unicef: June 15 - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam rebels resumed recruitment of child soldiers in April, the same month it released more than 1,000

(continued on next page)

Appreciation
Dr. Lal Jayawardena

Dr. Lal Jayawardena (70) known to many as an eminent economist passed away on April 8 in Colombo. Those who knew him intimately cannot forget his admirable qualities as a friend or an associate or even as a boss. I was fortunate to be one who had been in all three positions. I came to know him from the time he joined the government service. I was then a research officer and Dr. Gamini Corea, Secretary, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs another world famous economist assigned me along with Dr. Uswatte Aratchi from the Central Bank to work with Lal on a three-year macro-economic framework for development planning. Ever since then Lal has been my principal mentor besides being a close friend. The association enabled me to improve my professional skills and intensify my interest in development planning.

His recommendation helped in obtaining a UN Fellowship that enabled me to complete my Ph. D thesis in Bristol University under the guidance of Prof. J.A.C. Brown, who supervised my work in econometrics earlier at the University of Cambridge (1960-1961). Dr. Lal Jayawardena was an Honorary Fellow of King's College, University of Cambridge where he graduated with a 'double-first' (1956) in the Economic Tripos and obtained his Ph. D in 1963. His backing and assistance during my career in Sri Lanka enabled me to climb the job ladder starting from the position of Deputy Director Planning to Additional Director Economic Affairs, Treasury and finally to Additional Deputy Secretary to the Treasury in 1976. He gave me the support and strength to overcome personal difficulties, especially when my wife was ill and later died in 1976.

All who had worked under him would gladly acknowledge his benevolence and readiness to help them during difficult times. He was unconcerned about a person's ethnic background and social status treating all who worked with him as teammates. He treated with respect all officers regardless of their positions. He was against all forms of discrimination that deprived a fellow citizen the opportunities to advance professionally. Lal's leadership qualities and the zeal he showed while working on domestic socio-economic and regional/international trade issues were matchless.

Dr. Lal Jayawardena was appointed as Secretary to the Treasury during the time Dr. N.M. Perera was the Minister of Finance. In 1978 he moved to the Foreign Affairs Ministry as adviser. Between 1985 and 1993, he was the first Director of the United Nations University's World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU/WIDER) in Helsinki Finland. During this period the WIDER Studies in Development Economics comprised a series of 32 publications. He chaired a WIDER study group on Indo-Lanka Economic Cooperation (1993) which outlined a reciprocal preference scheme for promoting trade between the two countries. The report provided the basis for the Bilateral Free Trade Agreement signed by the heads of government of the two nations in 1998. He was a member of the WIDER Study Group (1986-1987) which produced the 'Okita Plan' for the recycling of Japan's surplus to developing countries.

He was also a member of the Advisory Group of Eminent Persons to the Brandt Commission on International Development issues (1978-1981) and Deputy of the Committee of Twenty on the Reform of the International Monetary System (1972-1974). He was one of those responsible for founding the Group of Twenty-Four and was the Chairman of the Deputies.

The diplomatic positions held by Dr. Jayawardena include Sri Lanka's High Commissioner to the U.K. concurrently accredited to the Republic of Ireland (1999-2000), Ambassador to Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg and to the European Communities (1978-82).

At the time of his demise he was the Economic Advisor to President Chandrika Kumaratunga. He was also the Deputy Chairman of the National Development Council headed by President Kumaratunga. He was hoping to continue working for the socio-economic advancement of Sri Lanka and was optimistic that the peace talks would lead to lasting peace. Since development and peace are two sides of the same coin, he believed both sides would reach a compromise on the main political issue. In this regard, he referred to the tireless efforts of his nephew Milinda Moragoda former Minister in the UNF government and a member of the government delegation at the peace talks. This was when I met him last in Colombo before the LTTE decided to suspend the talks with the UNF government.

Lal's demise is a great loss not only to his wife Kumari, a well-known promoter of social justice, women's rights and head of Social Scientists' Association and son Rohan, but also many others who had benefited in various ways through his benevolence and guidance.

- Dr. S. Narapalasingam

continued from page 34

under-age fighters, according to the United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

Unicef persuaded the Tigers to release 40 of the 124 child soldiers recruited since early April, agency spokesman Geoff Keele said. Most of the children inducted were between 14 and 16 years of age, and 76 of the 124 were boys, he said.

"We have seen a spike in the number of children being recruited, and this trend is worrying," Keele said in a phone interview from Colombo. LTTE spokesman Daya Master said May 7 the Tigers are recruiting only those who are at least 18 years old. The April release of more than 1,000 child soldiers was the largest since the Tigers started their armed struggle in 1983. Sri Lanka's human rights record is watched by aid donors such as Japan, the European Union, Norway and the U.S., which have pledged as much as $4.5 billion on condition peace talks resume. ❑

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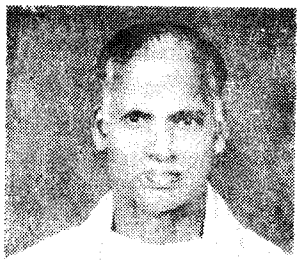
ABOUT PEOPLE AND EVENTS

OBITUARIES



Mr. Sinnathamby Ponniah, *born 4th September 1921, Attorney-at-law, Jaffna; beloved husband of Nageswary (retired Vice-Principal, Chundikuli Girls' College, Jaffna); loving father of Ananthy (Botswana), Dr. Vasuki (New Zealand), Sivahamy (UK) and late Dr. Vaheesan; father-in-law of Ishwaran, Kailainathan and Dr. Iyngaran; dearly loved grandfather of Mukunthen, Vyshni, Lakshmi, Pranavan, Sarannga and Divyen; son of late Sinnathamby and late Thangapillai of Valvetty; son-in-law of late Thambimuttu and late Thangamma of Thirunelvali; brother of Rasiah, late Kumarasamy, late Rasamma, Panumathy and late Sathasivam; brother-in-law of Duraisingam, Maheswary, late Bhuvaneswary and late Easwary passed away peacefully in Botswana on 21st May 2004. The funeral took place in Botswana on 23rd May.*
The family sends their sincere thanks to all friends and relatives who attended the funeral and sent condolence messages.

– 'Russets',
1A Kilworth Avenue,
Shenfield,
Essex CM15 8PS, UK.
Tel: 01277 218451.

Born: 01.05.1946
Died: 02.03.2004

Eng. Ramasamy Vijayaratnam, *formerly Dean of Faculty and now Head of Dept. of Agricultural Engineering, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, son of the late Mr. & Mrs Ramasamy (Vijaya stores) of Nallur; son-in-law of the Mr. Kandiah (Kandiah & Sons) and Mrs Kandiah; loving husband of Selva (Research officer in charge of Agricultural Research station, Thirunelvely, Jaffna); loving father of Purushowththaman (Jaffna Hindu College), Toothiransali (Chundikulei Girls College); loving brother of Vijakumar (Jaffna), Vijayadevi, Vijayarani, Jegasathy (all of London); brother-in-law of Nathan, Sundaralingam, Thillainathan (all of London). Naguleswary (Jaffna); uncle of Anand, Meni, Luxey, Vasanth (all of London), Luxana (Jaffna) passed away peacefully at his residence in Jaffna on 2nd March 2004. The funeral took place on 4th March 2004.*
The family thank all relatives and friends who attended the funeral and sent messages of their condolences and for their support during the period of sorrow. We would also like to thank the staff and students of the Agricultural Engineering faculty of the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka for organising the services and speeches at the funeral. Fond remembrances of Anna from his sisters.
– 11 Bulstrode Avenue, Hounslow. Middlesex, TW3 3AA, UK.
Tel: 0208 577 6377 (Mrs. Sundar). 0208 560 0375 (Mrs Nathan)/ 0208 230 0619 (Mrs Thillai)

IN MEMORIAMS

Fifth Anniversary Remembrance

In ever loving and precious memory of ***Mrs Rasathy Thirunavukkarasu,*** *daughter of the late Dr. and Mrs Ambalavanar of Suthumalai, Sri Lanka on the fifth anniversary of her passing away on 4.7.99.*
Sadly missed and fondly remembered by her beloved husband Thirunavukkarasu; daughters Vasuki and Dr. Vatsala; sons-in-law Pathmalingam and Suresh; grandchildren Thusan, Shiva and Suji; brothers Dr. Ponnambalam (Melbourne, Australia), Sritharan (Jaffna) and their families – 28 Foxmead Close, Enfield, Middx. EN2 7JG. Tel: 0208 363 0922.

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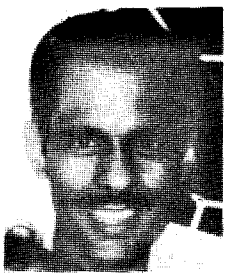
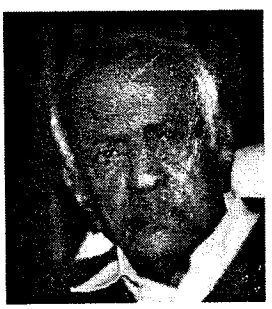


In ever loving memory of **Balasubramaniam Sivaganathan** *on the thirteenth anniversary of his passing away on 22nd June 1991.*
Remembered with love and affection by his step mother Mrs Rajaletchumy Balasubramaniam (Australia); wife Kamala (Sri Lanka); brothers Dr. Sivaloganathan (UK), Thirunavukkarasu (Australia), Radhakrishnan (Chennai), Sritharan (Australia) sisters Mrs. Gowri Pathmanathan, Mrs Bhagawathy Mohanadas (both of Sri Lanka), Mrs Mangayarkkarasi Jetheenndran and Mrs Jayanthi Kumaranayagam (both of Australia) – 22 Oakwood Drive, St. Albans, Herts AL4 0XD.

Anniversary Remembrance



In cherished memory of ***Mr. Chelliah Paramananthan (Mallie)*** *on the fourth anniversary of his passing away on 3rd June 2000.*
Affectionately remembered by his sons, daughter, daughters-in-law, son-in-law and grandchildren.

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Amma:
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Born: 04.09.1920
Rest: 09.05.2001

Aiyah:
Sayambunather Vyramuttu Rattinam
Born: 30.03.1922
Rest: 09.07.1997

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by sons Pathmanathan, Ramanathan and Loganathan; daughters-in-law Vasuki, Vijeyaladchumy and Thanaledchumi; grandchildren Vijayaluxmi, Thevakumar, Senthooran, Delaney, Bhavan, Kugan, Ashavidthya and Sathian; great grand daughters Krishni and Vishala

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Jul 1 *Full Moon; Feast of St. Oliver*
2 *Feast of Our Lady of Madhu*
3 *Feast of St. Thomas*
5 *Sankadakara Chathurthi*
11 *Feast of St. Benedict*
12 *Kaarthikai; Ekaathasi*
13 *Feast of St. Henry*
14 *Pirathosam*
15 *Feast of St. Bonaventure*
16 *Amaavaasai; Feast of Our Lady of Carmel*
20 *Addi Sevai 1*
21 *Addi Pooram; Chathurthi*
22 *Feast of St. Mary Magdalene*
23 *Shashti; Feast of St. Bridget*
25 *Suntharamoorthy Swamigal Guru Pooja*
27 *Addi Sevai 2*
28 *Sukkla Ekaathasi*
29 *Pirathosam; Feast of St. Matha*
31 *Full Moon; Feast of St. Ignatius*

WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate
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Sukkanya, *daughter of Mr. & Mrs Krishnathasan of 7 Greybeaver Trail, Toronto, Ontario M1C 4P1, Canada and* ***Janakan,*** *son of Mr. & Mrs Saravanapavan of 38 Hepscott Terrace, Toronto, Ontario M1W 1E1, Canada on 28th May 2004 at the Wedding Hall, Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada.*

Ragavan, *son of late Mr. C.Balasingam and Mrs B.Balasingam of 3A, The Drive, Northwood, Middlesex HA6 1HQ,UK and* ***Shankari,*** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs. S.Narendranathan of 46/1 Boswell Place, Colombo 6, Sri Lanka on 6th June 2004 at Empire Ball Room Hall, Mt. Lavinia Hotel, Mt. Lavinia, Sri Lanka.*

Senthooran, *son of Mr.R. & Mrs V.Pathmanathan of Dwarakai, 17 Mulberry Court, Bishop's Stortford, Herts CM23 3JW, UK and* ***Delaney,*** *daughter of Mr.K. & Mrs. S. Murugiah of 27 Stonleigh Road, Clayhall, Ilford, Essex IG5 0JB,UK on 13th June 2004 at Lakhamshi Virpar Hall, CoopersLane Road, Northaw, Herts.*

SRI LANKA INFORMATION SITE

WWW.srilankans.co.uk

Suthan's "Sugasangeetha"

It was a fine evening and the beautifully decorated Beck Theatre in Hayes was the venue of the vocal debut performance (Arangetram) of one of the best young Tamil talents, Suthan Sivapathasundaram. The compere was the well-known Dr. K.Sivakumar, who gave the welcome address. As usual, his unique poetic speech was well received. He quoted Appar Swamigal's Thevarem, 'Osai oli ellam aanaai Neeye' appropriately for us to see that music is the creation of God as the best media to attain enlightenment. Guru Kuttralam Nagarajan addressed the audience and quoted Thiru Valluvar and his Kural, 'Kunam naadi kutram naadi' meaning 'Judge a man by his virtues'. That was exactly what the audience witnessed, a very talented Suthan displaying his musical ability at his best.

Suthan began the concert with the Behag Raaga Varnam composed by Mysore Vasudevacharya followed by the invocation to Lord Ganesha, 'Maha Ganapadhim' in Atana Raaga set to Adi Thalam. He selected a very beautiful but difficult Pancharathna Keerthanam in Raaga Natai and delivered it in style for which Guru Nagarajan needs to be congratulated for the hard work and dedication, which brought Suthan to such a high standard and gave him confidence. Suthan's academic and other abilities are well known. He is a proud Gold medallist in western classical violin and gained mountaineering skills by climbing to the top of Ayer's Rock in the Northern Territory in Australia at the age of 8.

Suthan's brother Sunthar, a well-versed musician in Carnatic Violin and Flute, Western Classical Violin and Vocal (with B grade at A Level), Member of the National Youth Choir of Great Britain, provided the violin accompaniment. His calm and confident style came to light, when the audience applauded for his solo raga pieces. On the mirdangam was Sri Balachandar, one of the best in London who supported Suthan throughout the concert with care. Sri. R. N. Prakash on the Ghatam, again one of the best did justice to his expectations. On the Morsing was Sri. K. Sithamparanathan, who delighted the audience, especially during the Thani Avartha-nam (percussion solo)

The concert proceeded with the composition ' Marivere' in Lathanki Raagam set to Kandachappu thalam. Suthan's musicality was well noticeable with his effortless Kalpana swaram in this piece. The concert reached its peak, when Suthan began Raagam Thanam Pallavi, the most demanding piece in a concert, in Raagam Shanmugapriya. Pallavi is a rhythmical composition which needs at most confidence and concentration. Suthan performed his Guru Nagarajan's composition " Muruga Guha Shanmuga Valli Manalla" set to Kanda tripura Thalam (cycle of 9 counts) in three speeds and in triplets (thisra jathi) followed by the garlands of swaras in Raagamaalika rendered in Raagas Behag, Kaanada and Shivaranjani. The percussion must have a special mention as it received a warm appreciation from the audience.

Followed the sweet evening Raaga Vasantha and the composition 'Paramapurusha' and the elaborate swaras was right for the moment. 'Unnai Allai' in Tamil was a welcome change in Kalyani Raaga composed by Papanaasam Sivan. Kalyani Raaga improvisation was indeed a feast, 'Neeyee Meenatchi Kaamacchi Neelayathakchi' of the charanam selected for further elaboration (Niravali) very appropriately. His improvised swaras was no doubt the climax of the evening.

Suthan paid homage to the Trinities by rendering Saint Thiyagaraja's 'Ganamuthe' in Raaga Ganamurthy and Sri Muthusami Dikshadar's 'Nantha Gopala' in Yaman Kalyani Raagam, The famous Tamil composition 'Enna Kavi Paadinaalum' in Neelamani Raagam brought the memories of the late 'Sangeetha Gaana Saagaram' Madurai Somasundaram. Uthukkadu Vengatasubbhaiyar's 'Naatha Mulali' took the rightful place in the concert. The triplet movement of the piece gave the audience fresh attention. 'Kaanavendamo ?' was sung with devotion. The concert concluded with the Thillana in Revathi Raagam followed by Thiruppugal.

The Chief Guest Dr. Karaikkudi Sambasiva Subramanyan spoke about the Guru and Shisya's dedication and appreciated the musicians for their support. Young musicians like Suthan definitely need encouragement from the Tamil society.

Manickam Yogeswaran

Cancer Aid for North/East (Sri Lanka)

92 Eelbrook Avenue, Bradwell Common, Milton Keynes, Bucks. MK13 8RB

WWW.caneuk.org

An Appeal for Building A Hospice in Jaffna

CANE, Cancer Aid for North and East - Sri Lanka, is an organisation founded in 1993 and was registered as a charity by the Charity Commissioner in UK. Our aim is to provide medical, financial and other assistance to cancer patients in North/East Sri Lanka. At present we are carrying various activities stipulated below

(a) Financial assistance to help cancer patients to afford treatment in Maharagama.

(b) Arranging visits by cancer specialists from Colombo to treat patients in Tellipalai.

(c) Speeding up biopsy facilities for early diagnosis.(80% of cancer is diagnosed too late)

(d) We have recently started a mobile

Hospice to these terminally ill patients in their homes and over 200 home visits have been made in the past four months, providing pain relief, medication, nutritional supplements etc.

We found during these home visits that there are many patients who could benefit from residential Hospice care. We could provide this worthy service to our community with your ***help.***

We have recently been donated with a 25 – larchum land in Jaffna to build a Hospice. The first phase of this project costs £30,000. We are having a fund raising show on 4th Sept. 04, but it is not possible to raise this amount on this show alone. The details of the show appear below.

We would be most grateful for your generous contributions.

Dr. J.Namasivayam
Chairman
Tel: 020 8505 4725

An Evening of Cultural Entertainment
Features
***Light Music**
***Carnatic Orchestra (Thiruvayoor Gothandapani & Group)**
***Up-to-date Documentation on Cancer Crisis in Jaffna**
***Dance (Mudralaya)**
Venue: **ST. JAMES HAWKEY HALL, Broomhill Road, Woodford Green, IG8 0BG**
Date & Time:
SATURDAY, 4TH SEP. 2004 AT 6.30 P.M.
Tickets : **Family: £ 25, Single: £ 10**
Could also contact:
Mr. S.Sabanayagam – 01908 679 035
or Mrs. M.Sriskandarajah - 020 8590 9905

THE SEVENTH ANNUAL SAIVA CONFERENCE organised by The Federation of (Saiva) Hindu Temples UK

The above conference will be held as follows:-

Saturda,10th July 2004 *from 9 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. at Highgate Hill Murugan Temple, 200A, Archway Road, London N6 5BA*

Sunday, 11th July 2004 *from 9 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. at the London Sivan Kovil, 4a, Clarendon Rise, Lewisham, London SE13 5SE.*

The organisation has invited the following distinguished Hindu Saiva dignitaries from South India and Sri Lanka to grace the occasion and address the conference on both days.

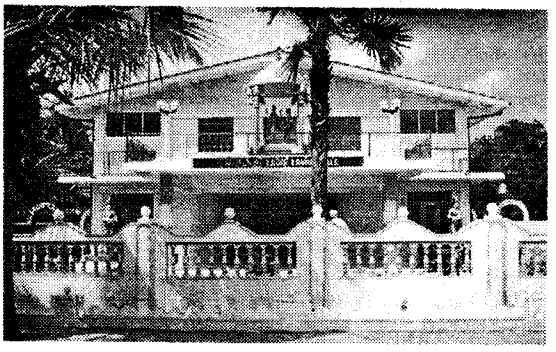
Dr. Srimath Kumaraswamy
Thambiran Swamigal
Hon. Justice S.Mohan
Professor C.K.Sitrampalam
Sithantha Vidyanithi
S.Shanmugavel

An awakening forum for young saivites titled ***Search, Share and Enrich*** *along with speeches in English and Tamil and singing Thirimurai by the youngsters with prizes for winners and a drama have been arranged for the first day of the conference.* ***Swami Tantradeva*** *will speak on* ***Religious Conversions*** *on the same day.*

On Sunday, the second day, Saivite ladies led by Mrs Thamilarasi Sivapathasundaram will make their contribution towards the success of the conference followed by a discussion on ***"Saiva Religious Education in London Tamil Schools"*** *led by* ***Swami Tantradeva*** *in which delegates from these schools will take part.*

Mr. Wimal Sockanathan *will be the compere of the conference.*

Grand Hall Complex Gifted To Jaffna Tamils



Mr. V. Sivasundaram, Proprietor of Western Jewellers and other business establishments in London has formed the V & T Trust in memory of his late parents Veluppillai and Theivanai. The Trust funded the construction of a large building complex comprising a grand assembly hall, dining hall and other facilities in his ancestral township of Averangal in Jaffna, bordering the Jaffna – Point Pedro Road. He gifted this complex to the Tamils of Jaffna to be used for Hindu religious and cultural meetings, weddings and other functions. Mr. Aru Thirumurugan who is renowned for his religious discourses and untiring social work to improve the lot of the people of Jaffna gladly undertook the planning and completed the building of the complex in less than an year. Moreover, his yeoman service continues and he is in charge of maintaining and running the project. .

Mr. Sivasundaram has planned a scheme for the awarding of 25 scholarships annually to deserving Tamil students to continue their education at the Jaffna and other universities in Sri Lanka. The first batch of them will enter their universities in September/October 2004.

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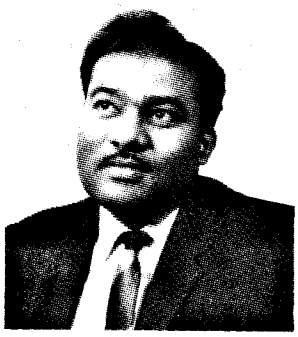
First Anniversary Remembrance



In loving memory of ***Sithamparapillai Thiruchelvam****, beloved husband of Dhanapathy; beloved father of Sharmini and Shanjeev on the first anniversary of his passing away on 5th May 2003.*

We are truly blessed to have had such an exceptional father whose guidance and love can still be felt today. His good heart, delightful innocence and ever-ready willingness to help people touched all those who knew him. He was the innately generous, eternal optimist who possessed an awesome understanding of Hinduism, Tamil Culture and Philosophy.

He was one of those rare individuals who dedicated the majority of his free time, energy and resources for the betterment of the community. (Having such an understanding and supportive wife was a God-send.)

Our father's vision and pioneering spirit was evident as soon as he came to England.

He was the first person to screen Tamil films in the U.K. He was the first Sri Lankan to organise charter flights to and from Sri Lanka. As the Vice President and a Founding Member of The London Tamil Sangam, he was the first to bring world-renowned artistes of music, dance and drama (such as M.S. Subulakshmi and Kumari Kamala) to England. He also brought the Indian President Rajaji.

The determination to ensure that Tamil culture thrived, led him to establish the first Tamil school in the U.K. – The Wimbledon Tamil School. Mr. Anandaraja shared the same ethos for a Tamil school and worked with our father for a brief time before emigrating to America. Our father delighted in personally teaching the Tamil language and culture to children for many years. All the excellent teachers of language, Vocal music, Veena, Miruthangam, Flute, Violin and Bharathanatyam at the school, shared the same dedication resulting in a wonderfully happy environment conducive to learning.

In addition, our father was sought out by the Mauritius community who came from all over England to attend his Tamil classes at the Highgate Murugan Temple. He was devoted to various temples and as the chairman of the social and cultural committee, he organised many cultural events.

One of his interests was, in the words of Dr. S. Pasupathy Raja (a dear friend) "fostering and promoting Saivaism. He was greatly involved in the building of Highgate Murugan Temple, particularly in encouraging membership and cultural programmes.

He was a great friend who was positive in his ways. When we were depressed, he would cheer us up with his thoughts. He would say that he was a born optimist and would not let anything dampen his hope or enthusiasm. We should take a leaf out of his book and do likewise. May his soul rest in eternal peace." Wisdom and Purity of the heart are priceless treasures, which our father had in abundance. There is so much more good he achieved which we have not written about, but everything culminates to the fact that he is cherished in countless hearts and minds. Such a loving father and devoted husband was a gift for which we are eternally grateful

– Sharmini and Shanjeev.

The following are a few of the many tributes paid to our father.

I met Thiru soon after I arrived in London to assume office as High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in the U.K. From that time, till his passing away, we remained in close contact.

Thiru's life commands attention as much for what he was as an individual as for what he did.

There was no trace in him of hubris, flamboyance or thrusting aggressiveness. He had in the words of the poet " Borne his faculties so meek." While pursuing his career as an accountant, he also devoted himself diligently to the task of enriching the cultural life of the Tamil community in London. He was associated with the initiative to build the Highgate Murugan Kovil and was a founding member of the London Tamil Sangam.

In the evening of his life, he could have looked back with satisfaction on a life well-lived and full of purpose. In addition, there were grounds for deep gratification, shared with his wife Dhanapathy at the laudable success achieved by the two children in their chosen fields of work and endeavour- the son a career diplomat with the British foreign office and the daughter a microbiologist and an accomplished vocalist in carnatic music.

I wish to quote some of the most relevant words of Lord Krishna with regard to the nature of life in this world (corporeal life) and the inviolable, imperishable eternal life-soul that dwells transiently in the mortal body.

'Just as the dweller in this body passes through childhood, youth and old age, so at death he merely passes into another kind of body.

That which is non-existent can never come into being and that which is can never cease to be.

Bodies are said to die. That which possesses the body is eternal. It cannot be limited or destroyed.'

By Mr A.T.Moorthy
(Former High Commissioner for Sri Lanka)

One year has passed since our "Thiru" left us. His memories have ingrained and stabilized in the thoughts of all the Hindus living in the North of England. Thiru was a man who dedicated his time, energy, money and efforts for the development of the Hindu religion. He had been instrumental in the development of many Hindu temples in the United Kingdom. We the trustees of the North England Murugan Temple of Yorkshire are indebted to Thiru for the services offered by him. He whole-heartedly supported our temple project since its inception 10 years ago in 1994. Thiru took a lot of initiatives, advised the Trust Board on the methodology and the concept of poojas and abishehams, travelled all the way from London and brought in Murugan with Valli and Theiwayanai in his own vehicle together with a leading priest in London.

He negotiated with the Archway Temple trustees and the Indian architects and donated a Kalyanamurugan to the North England Sri Murugan temple.

We the Hindus of the North of England will never forget Thiru throughout our lives. We sadly miss Mr Thiruchelvam and pray to God for his soul to rest in peace.

From:The Board of Trustees,
North England
Sri Murugan Temple, West Yorkshire.

My family and I have known Uncle Thiru and his family for over 25 years. He was one of my family's closest and dearest friends. So my perspective on uncle is unique to my experience but the feelings within it I'm sure would permeate the mind of anyone who had the good fortune to know him. They say that a measure of a person's success is how

many lives they touch and influence. I am certain that there are many people who, like me have very fond memories of uncle Thiru, because he touched all our lives with that same brush of love, humour and charm.

Let me begin with a simple statement – Uncle Thiru was one of the most remarkable individuals that I have ever had the privilege to know and no eulogy – no matter how heartfelt – can ever begin to do him justice.

I was very fortunate to have interacted a great deal with uncle and in particular I enjoyed immensely the many long and interesting conversations we often had. They were filled quite literally with his experience, strength and hope. Uncle Thiru has influenced my life a great deal, particularly in helping me shape my outlook on life. He was one of those people who would always be willing to advise you – and you would know that any advice he gave always had your best interest at heart. He had a certain charm and warmth, rarely seen among those in our community, and his relaxed, friendly and informal approach drew you to him. For me personally, I always felt confident in his presence, a feeling I rarely experience among other elders in our community. Like most Tamils of my age group, my fondest memories of uncle are those when I was young and attending Tamil school. Most of my recollections as a youngster are centred around the Tamil school. Every Saturday, 2:00 pm at the Wimbledon Tamil school, uncle Thiru would be there with his great smile, orange juice and custard creams. His patience, care and love for the children at the school was something very rare. He had a way with the youth that is so rare in our community.

I personally was quite a naughty child, but always found uncle Thiru to be calm, patient and always encouraging. He never criticised, never passed judgement, but always saw the best side of an individual and always tried to bring that out.

In the past 6 months I have attended several meetings to discuss why some of our Tamil youth today are turning to crime and violence. My view is that they lack support and encouragement from senior members of our community. It's ironic that during one of these meetings I met another Wimbledon Tamil school 'old boy' and we both discussed how we may have also turned to 'anti – social behaviour' if it had not been for people like uncle Thiru to support, encourage and provide the security that all youngsters need.

I think I can safely say that many of my generation would have lost our Tamil identity if it had not been for Uncle Thiru. He was like the 'Godfather' of Tamilness for us, the first generation of British Tamils. It was through him that we were exposed to our Tamil heritage, our language, music and dance. My love for carnatic music has its roots in the days of the Tamil school, where thanks to Uncle Thiru I had the opportunity to learn miruthungam. I remember the many functions at the Wimbledon Town Hall and The Merton Hall where many of us young Tamils performed Tamil readings, dance and music as part of the school's cultural event – all thanks to Uncle Thiru.

It was not only during the Tamil school days that I remember Uncle. During my adult life whenever I met him or called him he would often discuss with me my career, always providing me with positive, sound suggestions, always encouraging and supportive. His advice really had a great impact on me, as it's rare to find someone from Uncle's generation willing to impart such great knowledge and experience to the younger generation. He was someone with whom you could argue with passion, without fear of offending and without fear of being put down as 'a youngster' who doesn't know what he is talking about.

I could go on and tell many other stories of how he helped others fulfil their ambitions and goals in life, but time will not permit. To finish I would just like to say, that I believe that the community has lost a really great individual. But it should be borne in mind that despite the passing of Uncle Thiru, he has left behind a family unified in the happiness of their memories. A daughter and son who will carry his message and qualities forward to another generation and in that we can all be assured.

Uncle Thiru was a great warm hearted, generous, loveable person. Those of us who knew him will never forget him. We will always remember the joy it was to know this fine man, the joy to hear the things he said, the smiles he shared, his kindness and how he laughed. That is how we will remember him.

God bless you Uncle Thiru and watch over you and God bless and comfort those you love.

By Dr. K Vairavamoorthy

(We regret that this article had to be reprinted due to printing errors in the previous edition)

Australian Newsletter

Sri Siva Vishnu Temple in Melbourne commemorated the tenth year of consecration during the month of May. It was marked with 1008 Sanghu Abishekam and special poojas.

A grand Tamil light music event was held in Sydney and Melbourne with Sri Lankan as well as Indian artistes. Tamil Eelam Women's Organisiation organised a "food gala" on Mother's day. It is an annual event and the profits are donated to welfare projects in the war torn Tamil areas of North and East.

Inbathmil Oli is the pioneer in providing a round the clock broadcast to several parts in continental Australia and some areas of the South Pacific. *Sigaram*, a Tamil television is currently broadcasting around the clock to selected locations in Australia. ATBC, Australian Tamil Broadcasting Corporation, which has been operating a round the clock Tamil radio broadcast in Sydney has now extended its service to Melbourne. No doubt, Tamils living in Kangarooland are the proud beneficiaries of the multiplicity of Tamil broadcasting facilities.

Indian Arts Academy organised a special function for the Carnatic Musical Trinities in Melbourne. New South Wales Federation of Schools organised a *Nadakavizha* during the month in Sydney. *Eelamurasu*, a Tamil fortnightly newspaper published in Australia hosted a cultural event on 12th June in Melbourne, where Tamil parliamentarian M K Sivajilingham was the guest of honour.

In recent times Melbourne witnessed several gangland wars, which so far has claimed about 25 lives. A Melbourne businessman ventured to organise bus tours to the crime sites similar to the ones in New York and Chicago. Nevertheless, the plan to ferry people around some of the notorious gangland killing sites never materialised perhaps on reflection that the idea was a bit distasteful.

Australia recently participated in the grand D-day celebrations in France. Australian Prime Minister's recent visit to both sides of the Atlantic has received unusual publicity and it would appear that the stage is set for an early general elections sometime in the next few months. It is no coincidence that British, Australian and American leaders who took their respective countries to the Iraqi theatre of war would be facing the electorate during the second half of this year. No doubt, the greatest nightmare for the trio would be the repeat of Madrid outcome.

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